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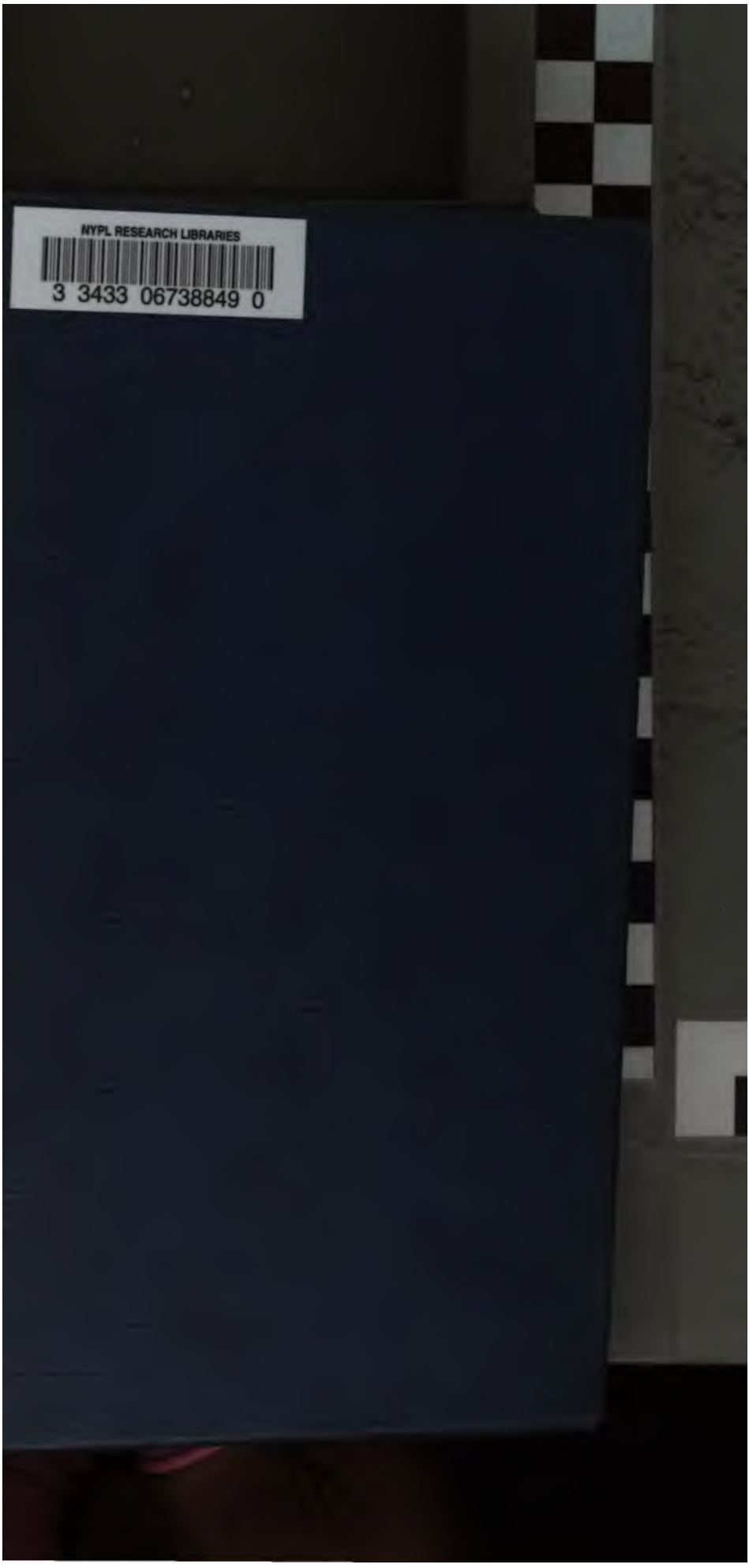
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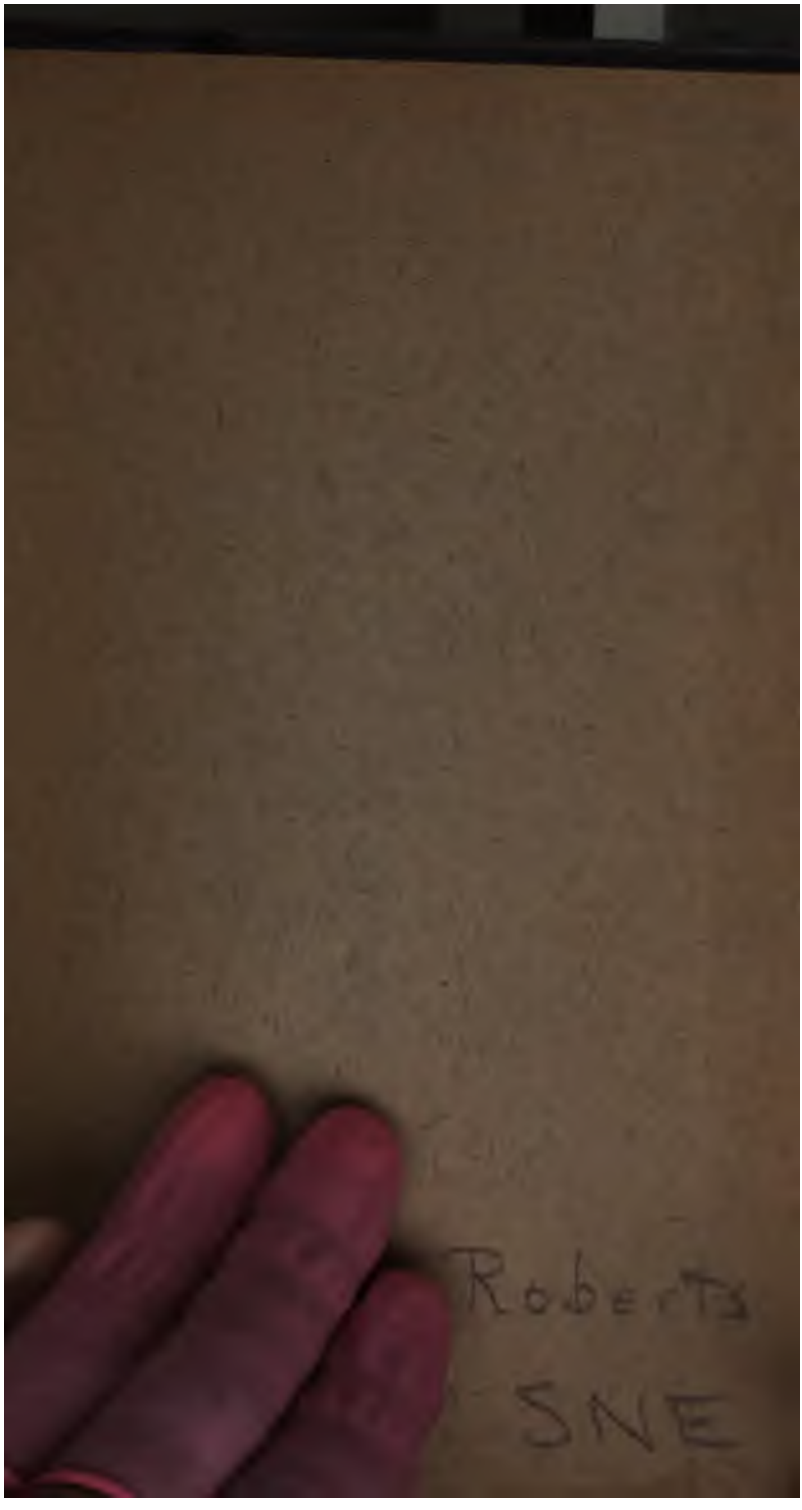
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WOMEN

OF THE

LAST DAYS OF OLD FRANCE.

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Front. "*I beg the king to allow you to kiss his hand.*" P. 61

WOMEN

OF THE

LAST DAYS OF OLD FRANCE

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"ON THE EDGE OF THE STORM," "MADEMOISELLE MORI,"
"SYDONIE'S DOWRY," ETC.

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"Les Français, à travers toutes les formes de gouvernement et de société qu'ils traversent, continuent d'être les mêmes, d'offrir les mêmes traits principaux de caractère."—STE. BEUVE.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE once lived, as Voltaire tells us, an old wig-maker, who always resigned an article of his manufacture with a humble sense of its imperfections. "Monsieur, your wig is made," he would say, "but it is not finished." A little later, contemplating it critically, "It is finished, but not completed;" and at last, "It is completed, but not perfect." And he yielded it up with a sigh, feeling that his best efforts had fallen short of his ideal, and that although in the eyes of the public a wig might be a small thing, in his, who knew what it should be, it was great.

With something of the same feelings, these Sketches of Life in the eighteenth century are offered to the public. There is a peculiar spell in this brilliant period, which alternately attracts and repels the reader. We know it more intimately than any other; it has been depicted by statesmen, poets, abbés, roués, and great ladies. Fine-pointed gold pens, dipped in gall, have described the luxury, the wit, and the sin of that time, in a style whose felicity and grace have immortalized the writers, and the secret of

which has perished with the period ; and, while we read, there is ever the thought of the flood which swept it all away.

The Sketches of Madame Lebrun and Madame d'Abrantés originally appeared in a magazine : they are now given in a much enlarged form. They were written when the name of France—of Paris—could be heard without the unutterable regret which they now awaken. At a time when events of European, or rather, of world-wide importance, have occupied all minds, it seems almost an impertinence to offer to the public so slight a work, but it is a contribution to the history of that past, without knowing which we shall try in vain to comprehend the present.

May, 1872.

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DAILY LIFE AMONG THE GREAT.

THE YOUTH OF A GREAT LADY.

"IF I did not fear to begin the history of a grave life by a somewhat grotesque preface," wrote Madame de Créquy, "I should say that I was born I know not when, which may seem incredible, but is perfectly true."

These few words are enough to show that Renée Caroline Victoire de Froullay de Tessé was not born the important personage whom she afterwards became, and that no one foresaw she would be the sole heiress of her great family when her young mother died, without even seeing the child whose birth cost her life.

The father was absent with his regiment; and being taken prisoner in Germany, passed seventeen months in such close captivity that it was only on his return to France that he learned the death of his wife. There was a son to support the family honours, and no one cared enough about the infant to have its birth registered. Indeed, registration was held to be a very

unimportant ceremony then, and even forty years later; there was a kind of feeling in noble families that all matters concerning them were or ought to be known so generally, that legal proofs were fitter for the bourgeoisie than for the noblesse. "Where was I born?" said the Commandeur de Tessé. "I neither know nor care. Baptismal register! what does it matter to us? Do you take me for a peasant?"

The curés, whose duty it was to record all births which took place in their parishes, seem fully to have reflected the feeling, and either omitted to do so, or wrote the certificates on loose leaves, giving away the original as often as not, if asked for one, to save the expense of the legal stamp required on each copy. Thus the neglect to certify Victoire de Froullay's birth proves little as to the family indifference towards her, but it is more significant when we discover that no one knew whether she had been baptized, so that nine years later one of her aunts thought it right to have the ceremony performed "under reservation." From the family pedigree we suspect that two Mesdames de Créquy are amalgamated in this memoir, but long life was a characteristic of her family: her great-great uncle, Grand Prior of the Knights of Malta, lived more than a hundred years, a hale old man to the last, and full of anecdotes, though he had no recollection of any events in the latter part of his life; daily expected Louvois, prime minister of Louis XIV., and dead some thirty years, to send him the Croix de St. Louis, and in

1719, bade those about his death-bed entreat for him the prayers of Bossuet, who had long been at rest in his Cathedral of Meaux.

It is unnecessary to mention particularly all the noble relatives of the little Victoire, none of whom seem to have taken the slightest interest in her for the first nine years of her life. The little affection which her father had to give was centred on his son and heir, who was brought up she knew not where, nor by whom. "I was only a girl," she used to say in after days, with a singular mixture of humility and amusement. Her nursery was in one of the towers of Montflaux, where she was born; it was piercingly cold in winter, and equally hot in summer; she had a peasant nurse, and the house steward appointed her servants, one of whom was a mulatto, another a one-eyed man, whose ugliness terrified her beyond measure. Left entirely to her nurse, she understood no French, and only spoke the patois of Mans, and when at length it occurred to some one that the little lady required education, and she was sent to her aunt, the Abbess of Montivilliers, she hardly comprehended what had happened to her, or what was said around her.

Montivilliers was a very great and important abbey, with 128 villages under its sway, and only three ladies in France were considered of greater dignity than its abbess. The Bishop of Mans was Victoire's uncle, and now the child began to be considered of some importance, though so little was she aware of it, that when her

brother came to see her, and told her affectionately that if she did not wish to be a Benedictine nun, no one should force her to take the veil, she exclaimed, almost in tears, "Alas! do you mean me then to be a Bernadine? I should die of grief; and there is nothing like the order of St. Benedict!"

"That has nothing to do with it," replied the young man, surprised; "I thought you might prefer marriage."

Victoire was too much amazed by this new idea ever to forget it; but though she had no vocation for a convent life, her father might very probably have insisted on her entering it, had her brother lived. She could not have been forced, however, to do so at Montivilliers. Abbess and Bishop united in refusing to allow this convent to be made the prison of unwilling recluses, and Victoire knew that her aunt had amply dowered a young novice, who was sent to her because the poor and proud family to which she belonged could not provide her marriage portion. There were none of the scandalous disorders in this convent which disgraced too many, but there was undisguised worldliness; the great rank and possessions of its Abbess alone would have rendered this inevitable, and in reading the records of such an establishment as this, we are more struck with the decay of all that could have made a convent life holy or desirable, than even in studying it under the rules of an Angélique d'Estrées.

Such an Abbey as Montivilliers had simply become a means of nobly providing for women of high rank who could not make suitable alliances. For several years before Mademoiselle de Froullay's aunt was appointed its head, there had been an interregnum, while a lawsuit was pending between the Court and the Convent, the nuns having refused to receive a certain Madame de Boisville, who was backed by royal favour, but whose pedigree did not entitle her, as they declared, to rule over them. The Court considered it more fitting to go to law than to use its power despotically. The cause was pleaded before the Parliament of Rouen, and the nuns gained it. There were constant lawsuits waged by the convent, as has been always the case with religious establishments from the time of Herluin of Bec downwards. There were robbers on the abbey lands, occasional murders, privileges to be jealously maintained, and Normandy peasants and farmers to deal with. Within the convent, the world took the shape of high-born nuns, envious of each other's pedigrees; of an old recluse, who had once made a journey to Poland, and had been chiefly struck, in the course of it, with having seen the arms of her family on the sign-board of an inn, a sore mortification, which had, indeed, to be borne meekly, but was very hard to lay, she would say, with a sigh, at the foot of the cross. There was a Prioress, who bore a grudge against the Abbess for objecting to her having had the device of her family enamelled on her Priorial staff, which device Madame

de Montivilliers asserted to be unbefitting the spouse of Christ. It was "*Tous teints de sang.*" The Prioress could not openly rebel, but she missed no opportunity of thwarting the Abbess, and consoled herself with the suspicion that Madame de Montivilliers, though of the great family of De Froullay, must be secretly envious of hers.

How could an Abbess of Montivilliers devote herself to a religious life? She would have been held wanting in her duty had she held aloof from worldly matters. In point of fact, Montivilliers was rather less than more worldly than many such establishments. At Origny, another Benedictine convent, where the nuns were nominally cloistered, the Abbess received visits from both male and female friends in her apartment, and gentlemen were allowed to dine with her. She had her carriages and horses, and drove out with her chapeliere, and some of the nuns. There was much party spirit in this convent for and against the reigning Abbess; but, we are told, "religion came in and calmed and soothed all." The nuns took in boarders, who entertained their friends, and even gave balls, at which the dancers were the nuns, who acted gentlemen, and their pupils, who represented ladies, and there was all the petty gossip and harmless childishness inevitable amongst a community of ordinary, commonplace women cut off from any interests or society but their own. Every "religious" accumulated private possessions, plate, furniture, and little comforts, and the

communistic spirit, which is the very bond of such institutions, hardly existed.

It is curious to compare the tone of convent life in the eighteenth century with that of similar establishments a hundred years before. When Angélique Arnauld came to Port Royal, the Bernadin Confessor could not explain the Lord's Prayer, knew not a single word of the Catechism, reading nothing but his breviary, and spent his time in the chase. When the Carnival came round, the nuns and their confessor prepared for Lent by a masquerade. For thirty years scarcely a sermon had been preached in the chapel; the nuns added gloves and masks to their conventual dress, and each had her private garden. After vespers they walked in their domains, and on rainy days they read Roman history, Plutarch's lives—probably in the grand old translation by Bishop Amyot, which our own Shakespere loved—or such romances as the time afforded. There was no absolute misconduct, but something verging perilously near it, and there certainly was no religion. Sometimes a little excitement varied the daily monotony, when the chase swept by, and if the King were there he would wave his cap, and shout "The King kisses the hands of Madame l'Abbesse!" Maubrisson was in a far worse state, for there reigned not only worldliness, but sin, and in both establishments was that worst of all conditions—Christianity forgotten.

Poverty was the only safeguard against the abuse of monastic establishments; it was on a true principle

that Francis of Assisi founded his mendicant orders, though, there too, another seed of decay soon germinated. The Carmelites, it is but fair to say, were an honourable exception among the religious establishments of the eighteenth century, observing their stern rule conscientiously, and passing their time in prayer, making clothes for the poor, and on Sundays, lint for hospitals and prisons.

When convents received pupils, the anxieties of the Abbess were much increased. Madame de Montivilliers declined to admit more than a select few, amongst whom Mademoiselle de Froullay made no friends. Of one she remarks, "When, long after, I heard that she had died in the odour of sanctity, I was surprised, and never sought to have any of her relics." Seven sisters dull, proud, and poor, she studiously avoided, well aware that they were educated out of charity, and that the Abbess held them at a distance. They wore one unvarying dress of serge, and had a habit of standing in a row, according to age and height, "like the pipes of an organ." The Abbess's niece began to feel herself too great a person to associate with these Demoiselles d'Houdetôt.

The education of Mademoiselle de Froullay prospered none the worse for being begun late, and she received one both good and solid. History, sacred and profane, was carefully taught to the pensionnaires; a due amount of theology, to arm them against the dreaded errors of Port Royal, and the strongest prejudices

against Jansenists was inculcated with it, while Protestantism was once for all hopelessly condemned as got up in the sixteenth century by the *petite noblesse* of France. A bourgeois religion! There could be nothing more to be said about it, at all events by well-born people. Geography was not neglected; mythology was more or less taught, and far more carefully the genealogies of noble French and Italian families; we involuntarily recall Florian's reply, as a child, to Voltaire's question, "Had he learned much?"—"Yes, Monsieur, I know the 'Iliad,' and how to blazon," when we find Victoire studiously instructed in the art of blazoning coats of arms. She also learned to speak and write Italian, and was allowed to make acquaintance with modern French literature. This must have included Molière and the two Racines, unless Louis was too Jansenist, Corneille and Boileau. Madame de Montivilliers knew a little Latin, and her niece would not be satisfied without learning at least as much; and in after days she fell under the unmerited suspicion of also being a Greek scholar.

Greek was still not altogether an unusual feminine accomplishment, the less common since the study of modern languages had crept in. The beautiful Abbess of Fontevrault,* whom Mignard painted, one of the three ladies of higher rank than Madame de Montivilliers, knew Hebrew as well as Latin and Greek, and had a mastery over her own language besides, which it

* Sister of Madame de Montespan.

would be well if all linguists would imitate. In fact, female education was more attended to in France at this time than it has ever been since. Learning and pedantry were not supposed to be allies, because there was nothing especially remarkable in a woman being learned. Madame de Maintenon had espoused the cause of female education, and founded St. Cyr, and "Le Grand Monarque" favoured it. But after his time royalty did its best to discourage it. The aunts of Louis XVI. had as little instruction as any princesses possibly could, and the daughters of the Regent none at all. Louise Elizabeth, Queen of Spain, begins a letter to her father thus:—"Mon chere papa, avant jere le roy le reine et le prince me vinre voire je netait pas arriver ici." Phonetic spelling could no further go.

In a circle of which Mademoiselle de Froullay can never speak with sufficient contempt, a good education was likewise given at this time. From the curious letters of Laurette de Malboissière, the daughter of a financier, we gather that amid incessant visiting, play-going, play-acting, and *petits soupers*, to which Hume and D'Alembert used to come, she studied as few girls of nineteen do now. Nothing came amiss to her: she loved natural history and botany; had a master for mathematics; read Epictetus in Greek for her amusement; and spoke and wrote not only Italian and Spanish, but what Victoire would have despised and thought only fit for financial circles, English—and German.

Mademoiselle de Froullay does not seem to have found her studies occupy her mind sufficiently. A dozen girls could hardly have lived together, even in a convent, without some attempt at genuine wholesome play, but the d'Houdetôt sisters seem to have spent their leisure time in counting each other's freckles or inventing startling stories; and Victoire passed hers in poring over old charters stored up in the abbey, and studied the crabbed old writing and antiquarian phrases to such purpose, that she deciphered two which gained the nuns a lawsuit that had lasted to the respectable age of 130 years. When this resource failed her, she would go and pray among the tombs of the former abbesses of Montivilliers, much to the astonishment of her companions, who wondered that she was not afraid of seeing ghosts; and a little to that of her aunt, who once said, "You are a strange girl! How is it that you are not afraid to linger so late in the crypt?"

"Why, aunt, how can one be afraid of the blessed dead?" was Victoire's answer. "What could an abbess do to me except give me her blessing? If they were knights, or squires, or monks, whom I knew nothing of, I should of course be extremely afraid. You know I really cannot believe the story which the eldest d'Houdetôt tells of having received a great blow from a crozier——"

"And whose, pray?"

"Madame de Gonzague's; one day, when she passed the tomb——"

"Another piece of utter stupidity of Mademoiselle d'Houdetôt's!" said the indignant Abbess; "a figure which has no crozier too! If it had been a breviary, Madame de Gonzague could not have done better than fling it at her head! What an irreverent, stupid falsehood! What a little liar! I forbid you to listen to or talk with her."

Among the sepulchral tombs was one which excited the imagination of Victoire. The young Abbess, a Montgommery by birth, had died at the age of nineteen years; the amethyst ring which she had worn in life was on her hand, and her golden cross hung around her neck. Some sad, strange story must have been connected with her, for her epitaph told that this girl of nineteen "had been unhappy in life, and persecuted by those who knew the goodness of her heart." "Pray for her enemies," were the concluding words. Doubtless Victoire created a touching history for the girl so early raised to such high dignity, so soon released from it; and there was something strange and peculiar about the monument itself which impressed her. The veil and robes were of black marble, the face and hands and feet of white, and the purple cushion, and golden crozier held aloft by a genius at her head, contrasted startlingly with the ebony blackness of the robes and snowy pallor of face and hands and feet. When she could do so unseen, Victoire never left the chapel without kissing the hand of Madame de Montgommery, unless she had been naughty, when she only ventured

to kiss her ring. One day it moved—it slipped off, and lay in the little fingers, which clasped it with tremulous joy and terror. Steps were suddenly heard; an old nun went by, but, without a glance at Victoire, knelt in prayer beside another tomb, and Victoire fled with her prize, which she looked on as a kind of relic. She fell into such despair when Madame de Montivilliers declared that it must be restored, that the too indulgent aunt allowed her to keep it, on condition she paid for the making of another exactly like it, out of her pocket-money, which was increased to meet the expense. The new ring was solemnly blessed by the Archbishop of Rouen, and fastened on the marble finger with great care, and Victoire was ordered not to pray in that chapel for the future, "lest she should take cold."

All the numerous and precious vases, reliquaries, and vestments of this rich abbey were seized by the peasantry in the Revolution; but, far from destroying them with the fierce fanaticism shown in other places, the canny Normans sold them to Portuguese and Spanish buyers, "Just," Victoire does not fail to observe, "as the English did at the time which they called the Reformation." Her hatred of the English, as a nation of shopkeepers and parvenus, was only equalled by her contempt for the house of Nassau. Looking down on them as upstarts and usurpers, she used to say, "That abominable William of Nassau! From earliest childhood

I have felt a contemptuous horror of him, a patriotic detestation which has never diminished!" And she would recall with what emphasis Louis Quatorze used to call England "that disobedient isle!" She disbelieved entirely in the existence of ancient families in England, and had a story, which she related with complaisance, of an attempt made by the Duke of Somerset to have his name of Saint Maur inscribed amongst those of the knights and gentlemen who invaded England under the Conqueror, which appear around the choir and apse of Mont St. Michel. Anything that told against the English was certain of ready belief with her. Commerce was low and sordid in her eyes, and she held, that the first commercial transaction of which there is any record was the sale of Joseph by his brethren.

So strong a contempt for trade must surely have had some deeper root than aversion to Protestant England, or sympathy for the exiled Stuarts. We probably find it in the discreditable fortunes then made by financiers, who bought offices and employments, such as that of *Fermier Général*, and grew enormously rich by grinding the classes below them. It was this sale of public offices which brought the Government under so much obloquy, and against this it was, even more than against the exorbitant privileges of the great, that the Encyclopédists thundered. None declaimed more against marriages for money than the philosophers of

the eighteenth century; Mademoiselle de Froullay herself could not have been more indignant with the nobles who allied themselves to the financiers' daughters. We are apt to suppose that the worship of wealth in France dated from the Empire, but in fact it was the canker of society nearly a century earlier. Those who had acquired wealth believed, and made all poorer than themselves believe, that gold could buy everything. Those who had not riches sought to live as if they had: "Let us be rich, or at least seem so," was men's motto; and when wealth was the measure by which all things were gauged, all means of acquiring it became right in men's eyes.

Another reproach which Mademoiselle Froullay brings against the Protestants is their inexcusable superstition. Why, she asked, should they believe so readily in ghosts, when they disbelieve in the efficacy of the only thing which a ghost could desire, namely, prayers for the soul's repose. She had a suspicion that Protestants were punished for their rejection of the true faith by being permitted to deal with the powers of darkness through magnetism and mesmerism. Mesmer and Cagliostro were perplexing the world at the time when she wrote her memoirs, and the wildest superstition was mingling with the boldest infidelity, quite as much amongst Romanists as Protestants, though she does not confess this.

Victoire was happy in her convent, and had no wish to quit it, and many events broke the monotony of daily

life. Now came the annual pilgrimage to Mont St. Michel, in performance of a vow made by Agnes de Normandie, aunt of the Conqueror, and Abbess of Montivilliers. Now some robber was arrested on the abbey lands, or a great lady visited the convent, and news of the world without reached not only the nuns, but the pensionnaires, who were not supposed to know anything of secular matters, though the Abbess was necessarily *au courant* of all events of the day.

The community was not always edified by the conduct of its noble visitors. The widow of the Prince de Conti, herself a Bourbon Condé by birth, and gifted with the terrible Condé temper, spent one winter at Montivilliers, on her way back from the seaside, where her physicians had sent her to bathe, as a precaution against possible hydrophobia, as she had been bitten by one of her cats which lay under this grave suspicion. How sea-bathing was to help her Serene Highness in such a case it is difficult to imagine. Never was epithet less appropriate than that of Serene to Maria Thérèse de Bourbon Condé. No one who knew her ventured to hope that her visit would pass over without some unhappy scene, but expectation was outdone when, in the midst of high mass, amid the kneeling throng of nuns, on the paten being held to her, she exclaimed in a loud voice, "What! what! like yourself! like yourself!" and rudely pushed away the sacred vessel which the priest held towards her. Priest and nuns and Abbess turned red and pale, and there was a moment's pause of mute

dismay, until Madame de Montivilliers, recovering her presence of mind, beckoned to Victoire, and whispered to her to tell the almoner, who still stood aghast outside the grating which separated the nuns from the congregation, that the Princes and Princesses of the race of St. Louis had the privilege of kissing the paten in a peculiar manner. Victoire hurriedly gave the explanation in Latin, and the poor almoner was so astounded by the indecent conduct of the Princess, that he could not comprehend that Marie Thérèse was indignant at having been confounded with the common herd of believers. Victoire was obliged to repeat her explanation in French. Then he perceived his error, and followed her instructions, and the angry little Princess hastily kissed her paten, and called out, "Thanks, little puss!"

Although the scene struck all present as highly improper, no one seems to have considered the privilege itself objectionable. The King of France possessed it, carrying it one step further, and selecting a wafer among those offered to him which always corresponded in number to that of the kings since Clovis. It was said that this custom arose out of Louis le debonnaire being poisoned by a consecrated wafer. Rank and noble birth were held to be such divine things that equality even before God would have seemed profane, and the old, half-crazy Maréchale de Noailles only expressed coarsely what others thought in secret, when she asserted that it should always be distinctly borne in mind that St. Joseph was of royal race, and no plebeian, though he had

been reduced to earn his bread. Sometimes more agreeable visitors came, and Victoire listened eagerly to their conversations, remarking with wonder that allusions to court events which she knew nothing of, made her aunt evidently wish to banish her, and that an allusion to the repentant and edifying end of Madame de Montespan, made her as restless "as if she were sitting on hot coals." Madame de Montespan was a cousin of the De Froullays, but naturally Victoire knew nothing of her history.

If other excitement were wanting, the community found enough in the escapades of the d'Houdetôts, several of whom were somnambulists, and had been known to escape at night through a window and wander about the grounds, or climb trees. One seems to have been haunted by her tasks, for she always made her way to the schoolroom, and when in this state had the power of imitating the handwriting of other people so exactly, that neither the pupils nor the nun who taught them could tell where the forgery began. She would annotate like the nun and write themes like the pupils, although when awake, her handwriting was remarkably bad. The sisters were ready to declare the d'Houdetôts were possessed, and had all this occurred half a century earlier, grave suspicion of witchcraft would constantly have arisen.

Gloomy events took place sometimes at Montivilliers. On one occasion an old shepherd was brought before the Abbess on a charge of witchcraft. "Unhappy man!"

she said, solemnly addressing the old man, who stood with a grim look of indifference before her. "Is it possible that you are so abandoned by God, his angels, and the saints, as to wish to use spells?"

"Faith, Madame, I help myself by them when I can," he answered in Norman *patois*.

"Then," resumed the Abbess, "I see that if you are not a sorcerer, it is no fault of yours; I shall have you sentenced to pass a week in prison, and if you do it again, I shall send you before the Parliament of Rouen, which condemns wizards to the stake, and has them burned alive; mark that!"

"You will not have the trouble," muttered the shepherd; "I have finished my time." And the next morning he was found dead in his prison cell, having hung himself. A kind of inquest was held, and the corpse hung in the abbey prison for five days, to the great terror of nuns and pensionnaires. Finally, it was dragged, face downwards, by an ass, to whose tail the feet were tied, and buried with a dead dog beside it at the foot of the abbey gibbet.

Startling crimes began to be committed on the abbey lands, and the news of two mysterious murders alarmed the convent. There were religious processions, public prayers and proclamations, but no information could be obtained. The peasants of the district were afraid to give any, if they had any to give; when questioned, they only answered, with their Norman caution, "I dare not anger them; our apple-trees and our houses are too un-

protected," and not one would act as sentinel or patrol at night. The Abbess grew seriously alarmed; the Procureur-General of Normandy wrote warning her that he had reason to believe there was an attack intended on the treasure or sacristy of the convent, and a brigade of soldiers was sent to protect the community against the robbers. Unfortunately, the brigadier stole the heart of the elder of the seven Demoiselles d'Houdetôts, who was sent home in disgrace to her parents, from whom, the other pensionnaires were duly informed, she received severe bodily chastisement.

There was general fear on all the abbey lands, for the soldiers sent from Rouen only protected the Convent, and every night a cripple-beggar, with neither arms nor legs, took refuge under the great archway, leading into the first court of the building. A poor woman came daily to fetch him with a kind of wheelbarrow, and set him by the roadside to beg, though he might very well have lived on the daily dole of soup, bread, and cider given by the nuns. Want and crime were increasing fast in France, as agriculture became less profitable, and the seigneurs abandoned their estates more and more to unscrupulous stewards. One evening the beggar did not return, and after charitably waiting to the unusual hour of half-past ten before closing the gates, they had just shut them, and had carried the keys to the Prioress, who always slept with them under her pillow; but with the keys, the Sœur-Cellerière came breathless to the Prioress, to

tell her that a rich farmer had been attacked on his way home that night. Being a strong man, he had knocked down one of the robbers, and galloped to Montivilliers to fetch the soldiers, who seized another; the whole party were now at the gates, asking a lodging for the robbers in the prison, and for the farmer in the court-yard. Further, he could not be admitted, but he dared not go home in the dark autumn night. The Prioress calmly replied, "that it was too late to admit any one." The other nuns, in great excitement and alarm, hurried to the cell of the Abbess, who was asleep; the nuns awoke her without ceremony, and she immediately ordered every gate to be opened which the rule did not absolutely forbid. The Prioress would not lose so good an opportunity of thwarting the Abbess; quoted the Benedictine rule and the "constitutions," and would not give up the keys. The nuns returned to Madame de Montivilliers with the news of the Prioress's contumacy. It roused the Abbess effectually; she rose, dressed, and swept into the cell of the Prioress, to demand the keys in person. An Abbess of Montivilliers was not obliged to consider herself rigorously cloistered, and Madame de Montivilliers, to the great admiration of the community, advanced into the first court, her cross-bearer preceding her, with an acolyte on either side, bearing a waxen taper, a dozen nuns behind, with their long black veils down and their hands folded on their breasts, while all the lay sisters stood around, wearing their grey capes and bearing

lighted torches in lanterns, whose coloured glass was painted with the abbey arms. Thus, in full state, the Abbess went to meet the strange group crowded at her gates—soldiers, assassins, and the man who had so narrowly escaped death. Roused by the commotion, and unnoticed by any one, Victoire had slipped among the nuns, and saw the whole scene. She might well declare, in her old age, that never had any so striking and picturesque come before her.

No one but the Abbess had authority enough to open the prison against the orders of the Prioress, who would not appear. Having promised an asylum, and given some refreshment to the farmer, she bade her own surgeon examine the person whom the farmer had knocked down and mortally wounded. Apparently it was a young and rather pretty woman, a strange assailant for a vigorous Norman farmer. Some there might have recognized the face, for it was that of the person who came daily to fetch the crippled beggar from the convent archway. A short examination proved that the supposed woman was a man, and the other murderer, whose fierce eyes were glancing from face to face, was the crippled beggar. He was of immense size, covered with rags and blood, savage and wild-looking beyond description. When the kind of cellar which he had slept in under the archway was examined, new consternation was aroused. Not only were sixty gold coins discovered, with several daggers, hidden under a heap of faggots, but two wafers, a pair of gold scissors,

a reliquary belonging to one of the pupils, and a quantity of hair of different shades. The wafers were instantly burned, lest they should have been consecrated, and there was a great investigation as to how the hair of the nuns and pupils had come into his hands, instead of being duly sold for the profit of the confrérie of the holy rosary at the fair of Guibray. It was too plain that the beggar had a friend in the convent. The mystery remained unsolved, and the community had material for discussion and suspicion for many a long day. Little could be learned respecting the two murderers. The farmer deposed that he was returning from a fair at Caen in the dusk, and hearing a piteous voice implore alms, approached some one crouched under a tree to drop some coin into the hat which stood on the ground beside the beggar. The moment he came close, something fell violently on his head; a third person started up, and stabbed the farmer's horse, but the rider, less stunned than they had supposed, struck at him and a struggle ensued, in which the disguised man received a fatal wound. It was happy for him, since he escaped the horrible punishment of being broken on the wheel, to which the Parliament of Rouen condemned the survivor. He was executed at Montivilliers, where the nuns spent the day of his execution in prayers for his soul. On examination it appeared that the two wretches had constructed a sort of seesaw in the tree under which the cripple usually sat, with a rope attached to it, so that one end

could be brought suddenly on the head of any one who passed beneath it. Several other crimes were proved against them, but whence they came or who they were remained a secret.

Mademoiselle de Froullay fell into disgrace for having left her bed and come into the courtyard without leave. Instead of sharing her aunt's room, she was banished for three days to a distant cell, with no companion but a deaf sister, who would talk of nothing but the best way of keeping eggs and cooking French beans. Three times twenty-four hours to be spent before Victoire could hear any more about the robbers! It must be allowed that Madame de Montivilliers knew how to punish a curious little girl!

All doubt as to her ultimate destiny was removed by the death of her brother, which left her sole heiress of her house. Fortunately for her he had no children. He died of small-pox, more fatal then than even in our own times, for Jenner had not yet discovered the remedy which has caused the grateful mothers of Paris to erect a statue to him who has preserved the beauty of their children.

Victoire had grown so fond of her brother during the few days which they had spent together, that the Abbess was afraid to tell her of his death, and during four long months only ventured to give more and more disheartening news of him who was in fact lying in his grave. The poor girl suffered more than if the truth had been told her, and the deep mourning, as for a

mother, which she was wearing for the Maréchalst de Tessé, seemed to her of evil omen. It was then the custom for all members of noble families to wear mourning, as for a father or mother, when the head of the house or his wife died: "A custom," says Mademoiselle de Froullay, "which nobly proclaimed the dignity of race, and one which no parvenu dared ape." The Duchesse de Berry, one of the worst of the Regent's daughters, was the first to neglect it, and to shorten the length of all mourning as far as possible, and it was noted among the many causes of scandal which she gave to France.

A convent, even though it were Montivilliers, was no longer a suitable abode for Mademoiselle de Froullay, "not now merely a useless girl." Letters came and went concerning her, and she perceived that some event was going to happen. The uncertainty as to what year she was born in made it doubtful whether she was twelve years old, or thirteen, or even fourteen; but however that might be, her father thought it time that she should see something beyond those convent walls, within which he had so willingly left her, as long as the young Marquis de Montflaux lived, and in 1713, Madame de Montivilliers told her that she was to spend that winter in Paris, and then return to her. Probably the promise of returning was only made to lessen Victoire's regret at leaving Montivilliers, for it was certain that as soon as possible a great marriage would be arranged for the heiress of the De Froullays. The little maiden had been brought to the convent in a litter, with as little

pomp and circumstance as possible; she left it in much grander style, in one of her father's carriages, under the escort of a lady's maid and two postillions, but none of her numerous relations took the trouble to come and receive her from the abbess. She wept bitterly when she bade the convent farewell; but there was the excitement of the journey, and the meeting with the father whom she had never seen, and all her unknown relations, to dry her tears. It was six days before they reached Paris, short as the distance from Mans to the capital now seems. In the Hôtel de Froullay, Rue St. Dominique, she found the most graceful and fascinating of fathers, who, indeed, had never taken the trouble to go and see her, but now welcomed her with charming courtesy. He had no intention of embarrassing himself with the care of her; indeed, it would have been impossible to a man who chiefly lived at Versailles, and had no wife or sister in his establishment. Victoire was to spend the winter with her aunt, the Baronne de Breteuil Preuilly, as her step-grandmother, the Marquise de Froullay, though a most kind and excellent person, could not take care of her, as she was just then spending her life in driving backwards and forwards between Paris and Versailles. He ordered "a panade au confitures" for her, and gave her one paternal counsel, namely, to be very careful not to offend the De Breteuils by letting fall any contemptuous observations on that "noblesse de robe" to which they belonged, as on that point they were extremely susceptible. With this, ap-

parently the last as well as first piece of advice which he ever thought it necessary to give his daughter, he conveyed her to the Hôtel de Breteuil. It looked on the Tuileries, and the pretty view and the luxury of all around her delighted the convent-bred girl, and drew from her such warm admiration as amused her newly-found relations, and made them declare her to be "naturelle au possible." It was occupied by a colony of De Breteuils. The Marquise de Breteuil St. Croix and her mother occupied the ground floor, and through her we have a glimpse of the exiled English Court, for this mother, Lady O'Brien de Clare, had followed Mary of Modena in her hurried flight from England. When they had reached Versailles, and were reassured by the kind reception of Louis Quatorze, she tore a leaf from her "Book of Hours," and sent it to her relatives in Ireland. It contained a verse from the Psalms: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies my footstool." Mademoiselle de Froullay respected her fidelity, and heartily wished that the prophecy had been fulfilled, as far as the abominable William of Nassau was concerned; but to her Irish and English seemed much the same; and though allowing that her daughter, "Miladi Laure de Breteuil," was "infinitely polite," she was sure that there was a constraint and prudery about her, and an undue assumption, founded on her descent from the royal tribe of O'Brien. Lady Laure and her mother, whose French title was Maréchale de Thomond, had rooms at St. Germain, where the Stuart Court resided, and only used their

apartment in Paris when they came for a short time to the capital.

On the first floor dwelt the Baron de Breteuil Preuilly, with his wife, by birth a De Froullay, and his large library, which had usurped three whole salons, as Victoire observed with some surprise. Her ideas of a library must have been suddenly enlarged. Another aunt, also a De Froullay by birth, lived on the second floor in solitary state, deeply impressed by the honour which she had done the De Breteuils by marrying one of them. She spent as little as her seven lady's maids and her coachman would allow her, and made a point of supping every night from home on economical motives; and her rank and her savings at last induced the old Marquis de Vieuville to marry her, by which means she obtained the "entrées du cabinet" at Versailles, which she had always pined for. Victoire never could comprehend how her aunts came to marry into this "noblesse de robe;" for, honourable as it was, and illustrious from the talented and distinguished men who had belonged to it, the far descended families of the haute noblesse looked down on it—"de la hauteur de leur bêtise," one is tempted to say in these democratic days. The Baronne de Breteuil Preuilly seems to have married to avoid becoming a nun. When Mademoiselle de Froullay once ventured to hint at her surprise at the alliance, she answered with gentle dignity, "But for M. de Breteuil I should be now fading behind a convent grating!"

Higher still came the apartment of the Commander

de Breteuil Chantecler, and of the Bishop of Rennes, when his lordship found that he had business in Paris, which was very often indeed the case. The Commander was a half-fearful, half-delightful mystery to the younger part of the family. Speaking seldom, sad and stern, he was the greatest possible contrast to his gay brother, the Bishop. He was so seldom seen that his appearance was an event, and the children hurried to the windows, if any one perceived him going out of the house. When he did so, it was always on foot, wrapped closely in his mantle, so that his face was almost hidden. They would watch him out of sight, and then turn and look at each other, they could not tell why. Their childish instinct did not deceive them; there was a mystery about this man which was never cleared up. He continued to lead a secluded and solitary life for some years, until about the time when public scandal was busy with the sudden death of Henriette d'Orléans, one of those Stuarts whom misfortune seemed to have marked for her own. He then left the hotel, bidding a valet de chambre accompany him to carry a casket full of papers, addressed to Louis Quatorze. He was seen to return alone, having left the valet at Versailles, and was heard to shut himself into his room, where he must have spent some time in burning letters, and a portrait of Monsieur, the King's brother, fragments of which were seen when the servants next entered his room. They roused the hotel with the news that the Commander was lying dead in his bed.

Louis Quatorze kept the secret of the casket, and ordered all the Princes of the blood to attend the funeral when it took place, in the chapel of the Knights of Malta in the Temple.

Over the head of the mysterious Commander little feet ran, and little voices were heard, for on the fourth floor lived the five children of M. de Breteuil Preuilly, to whose wife Victoire had been specially confided. The eldest, Emilie, was a girl of eleven years old, afterwards that Marquise de Châtelet whose name is too well known in connection with Voltaire. She had to give up her pretty rooms to the new-comer, and content herself with three smaller ones, looking into a dull street, and she never forgave the little usurper, who returned her dislike with interest, laughed at her lank height and large hands, and held Voltaire even more in aversion than she would otherwise have done, because he praised and admired Emilie de Preuilly.

There is no doubt that Mademoiselle de Froullay was unjust with respect to the talent of her cousin, which has the testimony of some of the cleverest men of the time in its favour, but she was universally disliked by women, some of whom were far too frivolous to appreciate her, though no more irreproachable than herself; a few, Victoire probably among the number, deeply resented the profligate life which she led as soon as marriage set her free from her mother's strict care. She is one of the most remarkable and least attractive persons of that strange time, when a world was crum-

bling to decay. Cold-hearted and vehement-tempered, utterly wanting in modesty, wrapped up in severe studies at one time, and at another acting comedy, tragedy, and even farce, with her guests for twenty-four hours at a stretch, with Voltaire for the presiding spirit, she astonishes or revolts, but never attracts us. Now she would sing with the fine voice that even those who liked her least have praised, and then she would shut herself up for days together, absorbed in translating Newton's "Principia," which she did admirably. One virtue she had, and it was no small one in that brilliant period, so courteous and so cruel in its wit; she would never condescend to cry down any one, and if told that some one had spoken against her, she coldly replied that she wished to hear nothing about it. Her studies made her far more unpopular than her misconduct, and the witty and merciless Mademoiselle Delaunay speaks in her Memoirs with disdainful astonishment of Madame du Châtelet's assertion that she must be alone to write, and was annoyed by noise. Memoir writing came so naturally in those days, when every clever woman kept a journal or recorded the *on dits* of her time, that none of them could understand that there was a little thought and solitude required by the translator of the "Principia." Emilie de Preuilly looked down with marked contempt on them all, and had no female friends. From childhood she was utterly wanting in the urbanity which was one charm of the time; she had claws like the rest, but not the velvet sheath which society required

them to be kept in. She was eminently unpleasing, yet savants admired her, and the double offence was unpardonable.

Her right to talent was hereditary. Her mother was an unusually clever woman, and her father had a strong love of literature and literary men. Moreover, he hated the Jansenists, which Victoire thought his best point. He was fondest of all of talking about his father, who had been Comptroller-General, and therefore was entitled Monseigneur. All the stories which he unweariedly told of his father ended in recalling this remarkable fact—"he was always addressed as Monseigneur." To Victoire's amazement, and the distress of his wife, he brought forward every title which he could possibly claim at every opportunity, and all her studied respect for him could hardly enable his high-born wife to conceal her despair at this mania. The Baron was a liberal man, and added very considerably to the income of his ungracious sister-in-law on the second floor, calling the annual donation of nearly £1,000 which he gave her "a New Year's gift." Riches he possessed, and esteemed little; rank he had not, in comparison with many families, so that he desired to believe his.

Mademoiselle de Froullay was a little annoyed at finding herself planted amidst this numerous family, but she used to say, with unconscious arrogance, that one good lesson it had taught her, namely, never to speak slightingly of second-class families, without looking

round to see that there was no one who could feel hurt within hearing, as she would have done before talking of red hair or hump backs.

It may seem strange how so many people, with very different interests and opinions, could have lived peaceably under one roof; but the fact was, that they mingled very little, took care not to get in each other's way, and kept up a strict and amiable courtesy, with a certain amount of ceremony, which did much towards enabling them to live together in a friendly way. Of course there was plenty of inevitable family criticism; the ladies, on the ground floor, lamented over the stinginess and the superstitious fears of the countess on the second; while she, in return, was seriously concerned at the vanity and luxury of her relations; though, as they would remark, she herself had seven lady's maids, and went out in a coach-and-six. But they were all too well bred to say such things to the people directly concerned, or to snap at one another, and to be disagreeable would have been considered bourgeois. Mademoiselle de Froullay gives us a glimpse of how boys were trained in those days; the system had its merits. "Give your place to Monsieur," the mother would whisper. "Kiss your aunt's hand. . . . Another time, my son, you must not draw an arm-chair into the circle of guests, as if you were a great man, and nearer to the fire than M. le Curé of St. Sulpice." Arm-chairs, or chairs with backs, were only allowed to great people; boys and girls sat on

pliants when in the drawing-room. "Never hand the cups," Madame de Breteuil would add—a maxim which does not so readily approve itself to the modern reader—"nor hand the liqueurs either, for that is bourgeois-like, and bourgeois manners and vulgarity are one and the same. Never touch a lady's hand without wearing your gloves. When you join your regiment, or when your father has settled that you are to have a house of your own, with a maître d'hôtel, and a cook, never forget to pay especial honour to ecclesiastics as a due homage to religion. Besides, the clergy are the first order in the State. . . . Never contest the pre-eminence of the clergy of France over the nobility. That is why I had M. le Curé of St. Roch helped at table to-day before the Comte de Froullay, although he has the blue ribbon."

We are tempted to think that the sons of noble houses were taught how to spend far better than spare, when we hear of the old Duc de Richelieu paying a visit to his grandson at school, and asking whether he had any money left. Unlike most schoolboys, M. le Comte de Chinon had economized, and had fifty louis in hand, sent him six months before by his grandfather. "Give me your purse," said the old Duke, winking his little eyes, as he always did when dissatisfied, and throwing open the window, he flung it to the sweepers below, observing caustically, to his grandson, that a boy destined to bear the name of Richelieu did not have an allowance simply to keep it in his purse.

The one person whom Mademoiselle de Froullay really felt any affection for in this class of relations was her aunt, the Baroness de Breteuil Preuilly, the mother of Emilie, a celebrated beauty, whose sweet, dignified gravity, brilliant grey eyes, and lovely complexion, bewitched the little niece, as they had bewitched many other people, who had seen more beautiful women than had the convent pensionnaire. Gabrielle de Breteuil Preuilly was not only a fashionable beauty, but deeply learned, studying sciences which attract few women, such as astronomy; and vanity and mockery, two faults which Victoire saw flourishing on all sides, seemed quite unknown to this charming woman, whose chief defect in her niece's eyes was her devotion to a husband in every respect her inferior, and her family pride. It must, indeed, have been excessive, since it startled even Mademoiselle de Froullay. She loved her children fervently, but seemed to regard them rather as branches of the great De Froullay race than to prize them as her own little ones. They were sweet and attractive children, resembling their lovely mother, with the exception of Emilie. A touch of superstition mingled strangely with her calm good sense, and sometimes her husband would mock at it; but if she fancied any omen concerned her children, her submissiveness vanished at once, and she became deaf to reason or ridicule. "Do you suppose," said she, on one occasion, while her beautiful eyes flashed light; "do you suppose, monsieur, that the mother of your children has less maternal instinct than the mother of

your chickens? Do not your hens feel the approach of a kite to their broods?" "Well, then, go, madame," he answered, with ironical resignation; "go and settle yourself in the inn near La Flêche, since you have dreamed that your son is going to have convulsions."

Perhaps something suggested the dream, for she hurried off, and found the boy at death's door. She doctored him herself, and brought him home a week later, but the unbelieving Victoire would not even then be convinced that her presentiments were Heaven-sent. A stranger in this numerous family, Victoire looked on, with respectful clear-sightedness, taking no root, and puzzled by many things in this new world to which she had been so suddenly introduced. Madame de Breteuil thought her well taught, but too evidently convent-bred, and undertook her secular education. M. de Froullay had judged with the keen wisdom of a man of the world when he trusted it to her, though Victoire could not understand how her aunt had acquired her perfect manners, since she had been married out of her convent, and the rank and profession of M. de Breteuil had not admitted her to Versailles, where she might have learned, "le bel air" of the court. She had not had a docile pupil in her own daughter, who aimed at being a learned lady since she could not be a beauty. It would seem as if "Emilie" took a malicious pleasure in asking unanswerable questions. She would come and say, "Do you think it more likely that Nebuchadnezzar was changed into an ox, or Prince Chéri into a bird?"

"Neither."

"I have read it in the Bible," answered the future ally of Voltaire.

"You have read nothing of the kind in the Bible," answered the mother, with visible annoyance. "Fetch one, and show me where you read such fine things. Now —where do you read that King Nebuchadnezzar was changed into a beast? I see that he became mad, but not a word about his being turned into an ox. That is a silly idea, worthy of a lay sister or a lady's maid."

Mademoiselle de Froullay always declared that the apparent learning of her cousin was only what she had picked up from her mother; but this must have been unjust. Victoire was always a person with strong prejudices, and an untrustworthy witness when any one whom she disliked was in question, not intentionally, but from absolutely being unable to see their merits.

Madame de Breteuil probably thought that her niece had read enough theology at Montivilliers, for one book which she recommended to her especial study was an old manual of good breeding, called "La Civilité puerile et honnête." A good deal of it was puerile in our English sense, and Victoire would say, "Why are we told always to break our egg-shells into little bits?" "If you left too large pieces on a flat plate, they might roll over on your dress, when a valet took away the plate," answered Madame de Breteuil, who was afraid of discrediting the book in Victoire's eyes by owning that she could see no reason whatever for many

of the maxims contained in it. Other precepts related to customs already out of date; for instance, ladies and gentlemen were forbidden to blow their noses with their dinner napkins, or comb their hair in church. Madame de Breteuil explained that once such advice had been needed, and added, that there were still people who would be the better for observing it, as two of her own acquaintance, people of good family, were apt to use the table-cloth instead of a pocket-handkerchief. She might have added that even at court such advice was not unnecessary. That terribly plain-spoken woman, the future Regent's German mother, had been known to animadvert on the free-and-easy manners of the young Duchess of Burgundy, Madame de Maintenon's own pupil, and to say that she hoped that she was improving, as she no longer let her ladies take food from her plate with their fingers. Mademoiselle de Froullay held the manual in great reverence, and thought that the good manners for which she was afterwards celebrated were, in a measure, owing to its teaching; but she remained lost in wonder how her aunt, without going to court, could have acquired that exquisite good breeding which even enabled her to pronounce the word "Monseigneur" with exactly the shade of difference required by etiquette, according to whether it was addressed to a bishop or a prince of the blood.

These shades of difference were serious matters then. When it became customary to call the married bourgeoises Madame instead of Mademoiselle, the courtiers

always pronounced the word "M'ame," thereby keeping up the distinction of ranks. How childish it sounds now! What a gulf there is between those days and our own! With our best efforts we can hardly enter into the difference between the nobility and all other orders in the state so sharply marked then, nor understand the serene pride of birth, and the all-importance of the court. In some cases the pride of rank was offensive, but this was generally in families of lower degree than the De Froullays, whose titles would have covered several closely-written pages, and whose ancient descent was far beyond dispute. They had no need to put forward claims which all Europe acknowledged. Their valets, however, could and did insist on them, and were far more punctilious than their masters. A coachman of Victoire's, after her marriage, quitted her service in a transport of indignation because she kept only twelve horses, and would not allow him to insist on her carriage taking precedence of all but those of princes. The grand seigneurs smiled with tranquil pride, as from the heights of Mount Olympus, on such poor arrogance, saying that their liveries were sufficiently well known to dispense with claiming precedence in the streets. There is something astounding in the family pride which pervades the memoirs of Victoire de Froullay, and yet it has something grand in it, when it reads "noblesse oblige" to mean that no De Froullay could stoop to a base or false act, and that it was her duty to keep her noble name free from spot or stain, as a precious deposit entrusted

to her to be handed down pure and bright. This was the fair side of that overweening view which the nobles took of themselves and their rights, and which was fast helping on the Revolution.

Amid all the strict politeness enforced at this time, it is startling to find what a license of speech was tolerated. The memoirs of Mademoiselle de Froullay are unusually free from such blots as makes many others unreadable, but even there it does not fail to appear. There was the same coarseness in England, without the wit and grace to redeem it.

She began to make acquaintance with the great world at the Hôtel de Breteuil, where there was a constant affluence of guests, though *only* twenty habitués came regularly to supper—a meal at which only especial friends were present. There were upwards of forty servants in the establishment, and it is much more astonishing that they lived harmoniously together than that their masters did. Sometimes the bitter-tongued old Duc de St. Simon would appear, but not to join the supper party, being too economical to share hospitalities which his station would have obliged him to return in kind. He was suspected of writing those startling memoirs into which he poured nightly the gall and bitterness which he had suppressed all day, and the mere idea of which filled his contemporaries with terror; but when charged with it, he always strenuously denied it. In point of fact, he had already been compiling them for forty-three years. "An old sick crow" Made-

moiselle de Froullay thought him, "withered up by envy, devoured by vanity and ambition, and always perched on his ducal crown." She, too, could speak and write bitter things; scorned his short pedigree, and was shocked at the contempt which hardly spared royalty itself, though they might have sympathized in his ardent desire to lessen the power of "noblesse de robe" and the Parliament, and increase that of the old nobles. Rousseau came also sometimes, looking like a vine-dresser with the head of Silenus. M. de Breteuil was charmed with his odes, and paid him a handsome pension; but it was only at dinner that he appeared at the grand seigneur's table; it would not have been decorous to admit the watchmaker's son as a guest at supper. Mademoiselle de Froullay makes little comment on his writings, which she was then not at all likely to have read, but she must have met with them later. It is evident that she read much throughout her life, but the golden age of French literature was already past; an infidel spirit was creeping in, which pervaded all, or nearly all, the works published thenceforward, and the lighter literature of the day, such as comedies and romances, was absolutely unreadable. There were authors full of lively talent, but not one dramatic writer whose pieces ever made any one say, as Montesquieu did of one of Boursault's, "I recollect that, after seeing 'Esop at Court,' I was so filled with the wish to be an honest man, that never did I make stronger resolutions." Massillon was preaching his magnificent sermons, one

of which, on the bad rich man of the parable, so electrified his noble audience, that with one impulse all the congregation rose up and stood in awe-struck attention. But Massillon must have seemed dangerously philosophical to Victoire de Froullay, if she heard the startling words, "What have you done for God, that you are thus preferred to the rest of mankind, and, above all, to so many unfortunate ones, whose bread is tears and bitterness? Are not they, like you, the work of His hands, and bought with the same price? Have you not been made from the same clay? Are you not, perhaps, laden with more crimes? Does not the blood which runs in your veins, though more illustrious in human eyes, flow from that same poisoned fountain which has infected the whole human race?" And then, like a prophet, the great preacher adds, "Your descendants, perhaps, may have to expiate in toil and misfortune the crimes of your ingratitude, and the wreck of your greatness will be as an everlasting monument, where the finger of God will write for ever the evil use which you made of it!"

How did such warnings sound in the ears of great people like the De Froullays? They probably admired the eloquence of the preacher, and in no way felt that his words concerned them. No one had clearer views of her duties to her peasants and tenants than Mademoiselle de Froullay in later life. She thought that a good seigneur ought to kill enough game to prevent its being harmful to the farmers, dower poor girls, give a

cow to a widow, leave fallen branches for the poor, and allow the sœurs de charité free access to the cellar and medicine-chests of his châteaux. But she seems to have had no notion of the burdens that were oppressing the poor, or of the numbers who died every winter of hunger; nor did she ever live on her estates. She saw as little of her dependents as M. de Froullay did of her. Her duty to her poorer neighbours was not one of the things which she learned from either Madame de Montivilliers or Madame de Breteuil.

We hear of no artiste at the Hôtel de Breteuil, nor does she make any mention of art in her memoirs; which is not wonderful, when we consider that until her extreme old age, Boucher was the favourite painter of the day. The only painting which she describes at any length is one which irresistibly moved her sense of the ludicrous. It was ordered from Boucher by the Maréchale de Noailles, and was a likeness of herself, with all her great-nephews grouped round her as Cupids, with torches, quivers, and wings for all drapery, and the breast-plate of the Order of Malta painted on their breasts to show that they were not common Cupids, but born Grand Crosses of the Order; while from the arrow of one floated a little banner inscribed F. E. R. T.* All the De Noailles, who were people of the best taste, laughed at it; but it really was hardly more absurd than the picture devised and ordered from La Grenée by the Duc de la Vauguyon, after the death of the

* Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit.

Dauphin. France stands by his bed; his three children, each decorated with the cordon bleu, weep near; and the little Duke of Burgundy, who died before his father, floated undraped (except for his cordon bleu) in the air, holding out a crown of immortality.

Literary man as M. de Breteuil was, it seems as if, even in his eyes, artists and authors were an inferior race, to whom great people extended a kind of enlightened indulgence. It was a general feeling. "It is not the fashion in France," answered Louis the Fifteenth, when some one proposed that he should admit literary men to his Court as freely as did Frederick the Great. The Duc de Richelieu, though a member of the Academy, a patron of Voltaire, made a point of spelling badly, because the great men of former times could not spell; a view of education which had been exploded in England for nearly two hundred years, though common enough in Henry the Seventh's Court.

Of "the first order in the State," the clergy, Mademoiselle de Froullay saw many. Among them was that inveterate card-player the Cardinal de Gèvres, and the Bishop of Rennes, who was so very often in Paris that she might have seen some need for a discourse which scandalized her in the Académie Française, urging on the bishops the duty of remaining in their dioceses. Of course, in the numerous family of De Breteuil, several of its members were ecclesiastics. Michel Vanloo painted a portrait of one of them, an Abbé Grand Seigneur, distinguished, gay, and dissipated-looking.

The Cardinal de Gèvres was Archbishop of Bourges, until he retired to an abbey at Rheims, where he did penance for his love of good cheer and cards by strictly observing the spare diet prescribed by the Benedictine rule. He would never play for money, saying that all he had belonged to the poor, nor buy dainties; but he felt no scruples, as the much-amused Victoire soon perceived, when the stakes were forced peas or costly wines. If he lost, he gave the winner a copy of his Episcopal Addresses, splendidly bound, of which he was careful to bring an ample store whenever he came to Paris, so it might be hoped that his opponent might derive spiritual benefit from their encounter. Going back to his diocese on one occasion, his eminence and his handsome young secretary were seized by the famous Cartouche and his robber band, who had established themselves in spite of M. d'Argenson and all his police in the banlieus of Paris itself. They appropriated his cross, his ring, the few louis in his purse, a pie made of robin redbreasts, and two flasks of Toquay, which he had won from M. de Breteuil, who was fond of the Cardinal, diverted himself with his love of eating and after-remorse, and made a point of losing when they played together at cards. The Archbishop sadly remonstrated as to the pie and the wine, suggesting that his secretary would require at least part of them. Cartouche replied by a polite invitation to join his dinner. Another of the robbers horrified the good Prelate by suggesting that the handsome Abbé was a lady in disguise. "Rash and

ignorant man!" replied the poor Cardinal, "do you not know it would be sacrilege?" Cartouche, quite as much scandalized, instantly knocked the offender down. "That will teach you to fail in respect for our spiritual lords!" he shouted. "Confounded pig, to insult the Cardinal of Bourges! Do you not know that he never takes tithes in a bad year?" enforcing his observations with a brick.

But the cross and ring, the wine and the pie, were not restored to the Archbishop. He ruefully told the story at the Hôtel de Breteuil, and added that he should make a point of never travelling again with his secretary.

Another story soon reached Victoire respecting Cartouche, whose presence in Paris with fifty or sixty companions filled the whole city with rumours and terrors. No one dared go out after dusk with less than five servants well armed; the bridges were considered so dangerous that several carriages always crossed at the same time, and since the time of the Frondes there had not been such alarm in Paris. Great was the astonishment of the De Breteuils when the Princess de Conty, whom Victoire met again at the hotel, declared that Madame de Bauffremont could give written passes which were always respected by Cartouche. The Marquise de Bauffremont was very plain, very clever, and a very great lady, tracing back her descent through Louis le Gros to the Emperors of Constantinople, and her maiden name was Helena de Courtenay des Empéreurs d'Orient. Yet even this did not precisely explain

the respect shown her by Cartouche and his band. The true reason reached the Hôtel de Breteuil in course of time.

Madame de Bauffremont had returned from a party at two o'clock one morning, and having dismissed her woman, she settled herself to read, and write up her journal by her fire. A strange noise in the wide chimney startled her, and while she was wondering what it could be, down tumbled a cloud of soot and a swallow's nest, and an armed man in the midst of it, who staggered forward into the room, scattering the burning logs from the hearth right and left as he did so on the carpet. Madame de Bauffremont was too much startled to utter a cry or call her husband, asleep in an adjoining room. The unknown took the tongs and replaced the logs on the hearth, pushed back the smaller pieces with his foot, and, bowing to the Marquise, asked to whom he had the honour of speaking.

"Monsieur, I am Madame de Bauffremont, but as I do not know you at all, as you do not look like a thief, and are so kindly careful of my carpet, I cannot guess why you have come down the chimney into my room in the middle of the night."

"Madame, I had no intention of doing so. Would you kindly accompany me as far as the house door?" he added, drawing a pistol from his belt, and taking up a lighted candle.

Madame de Bauffremont began to object, but the intruder was peremptory. "Be so kind as to make

haste," said he briefly; "we shall go together, and you will order the porter to let me out. Put on your mantle" (she was shivering with terror), "it is extraordinarily cold."

They went down the long galleries and staircases. Madame de Bauffremont sank down in the porter's lodge, faint with fear both for what had happened and what stories would be spread by her astonished porter, who let the stranger out as ordered. A hand tapped at his window, and a voice cried out, "M. le Suisse, I have been chased some miles over the roofs to-night by the police. Do not go and tell your master any stories against Madame de Bauffremont, or you have Cartouche to deal with—besides, the post will bring news of me the day after to-morrow."

The trembling Marquise hurried back to tell her story to her husband, who declared that she had had the nightmare; but the porter could bear witness to the fact, and there shortly arrived a respectful and apologetic letter from Cartouche, with safe-conducts for all her family. There came also a little box, containing a valuable diamond. M. de Bauffremont had it sold, and gave the profits to the poor. "Every one behaved admirably in this affair," remarks Mademoiselle de Froullay. Decidedly, Cartouche must have studied the treatise on "La Civilité puerile et honnête." It is a pity that he could not bequeath the tradition of good breeding among the thieves and brutal Chauffeurs of a later day.

The literary tastes of M. de Breteuil, and the high birth and fascination of his wife, drew a varied and brilliant society around them. There was conversation and cards for the elders, whist and passe dix, vingt et un, and lansquenet, and if fortunes were lost and won over the card-tables, it was only following the example set by the Court, where all the weight of Madame de Maintenon's grave and decorous disapprobation could not check the ruinous passion for gambling which had seized both men and women. Fontenelle tells us that the salon of Madame de Lambert was almost the only one where card-playing had not become "an epidemic," and d'Argenson also mentions it as a singular fact, that cards were as little seen in that house as at the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet.

The younger members of the De Breteuil household had embroidery or parfilage to turn to, or might listen to the conversation around them—and what conversation! clear, witty, graceful, such as only existed then, the art of it is lost, like the art of writing such memoirs as fell so easily from the pens of those who lived then. We have only biographies now.

There seems to have been no dancing, nor is there a trace of the passion for dramatic entertainments, so strong at that time, and which even had invaded Madame de Maintenon's model establishment, St. Cyr. The girls acted Esther with such fervour, that she was alarmed, and forbade the piece to be repeated. Mademoiselle de Preuilly made herself amends for

having no rôles to play in her girlhood when once married and at Cirey, but Victoire retained her prejudice against the theatre, and held it as a wholesome and charitable ordinance on the part of the clergy of Paris, that no actor should receive Christian burial.

By day, the business of the toilette took up much time. Curling, powdering, and rouging were lengthy matters, and rouge was above all indispensable, as a mark of the wearer's rank, for the bourgeoisie were forbidden to put it on. Sometimes ladies performed part of their toilette, such as the rouging and powdering, while driving from place to place, their lady's maids attending them in the carriage. It was considered good taste to wear rich and costly stuffs, and those of slight material were despised as only fit for the bourgeoisie. Marie Antoinette was the first royal person who ventured to wear them, and it called forth strong disapproval amongst the great ladies.

What was left of the afternoon was filled up by paying or receiving visits, or going to the Chapel Royal, where Massillon preached. Madame de Breteuil, for a time, was in the habit of taking Victoire and her young cousin, Elizabeth of Guise, there, but was obliged to give it up, because the conduct of the old Maréchal de Villeroy, Governor to the little King, prevented them from attending to the discourse. On one unhappy day the text was, "Blessed the people whose King is of ancient race," a text which afforded Massillon a grand theme. To point the application,

every time that it fell from the preacher's lips, M. de Villeroy sobbed audibly, wiped his eyes, and gazed so pathetically at the young king, that his granddaughter, the Duchesse de Boufflers, suddenly lost the gravity which she had been struggling to maintain, and burst into irrepressible laughter, heard all over the chapel, equally to her own consternation and that of the well-bred congregation. Every one heard and every one understood the cause, except the Maréchal, who came up to the De Breteuil party afterwards, saying, "Did you notice who was opposite my granddaughter, De Boufflers, during the sermon? I fancied that it was that Landgravine of Hesse, who has not put on Court mourning, which always strikes me, too, as absurd."

Victoire felt the sad indecorum of Madame de Boufflers' behaviour; but sympathized so much with the temptation, that Madame de Breteuil would not venture to take her to the Chapel Royal, lest she should behave as ill as the Duchesse.

Victoire's time was evidently much occupied by visits to relations and family friends. Her two great-great-uncles she, as yet, only knew by name; when they came, some time later, to Paris, it was to seek medical advice for the eldest, a man nearly ninety, who became alarmed about himself on detecting a slight failure of the appetite. They were persuaded that Victoire belonged to a generation or two back, and called her by the name of some dead ancestress. The present was a blank to the old

men, hale and brisk though both were; the past was still vivid, and they would sit and talk it over with their equally aged friend, the Bishop of Soissons, son of Queen Marguerite's chancellor, who never failed every year to hold a solemn service for the repose of Henri III.'s soul. "Ah! the Valois! the Valois! there never was a royal race like the Valois!" they would sigh in concert.

The Dowager Marquise de Froullay now appeared on the scene. She had had a favourite curé ill at Versailles, and a favourite friend ill at Paris, and was too much occupied by her drives from one to the other to think of Victoire, until they met for a moment as the Marquise was hurrying down stairs to drive to Versailles. Victoire saw advancing a stately lady, with a tall cap of the fashion worn in the time of the Fronde, and a skirt of rich silvery material, on which all the beasts that went into the Ark were embossed. "Mademoiselle de Froullay! Is it possible that I have not seen you before? I am astonished and distressed!" she exclaimed. Then she kissed her granddaughter, made her a ceremonious curtsey, and hastened away.

It does not sound an affectionate welcome, but no one perceived anything amiss. The manners of the time were studiedly ceremonious, and the use of the Christian name almost unknown. Victoire was "Mademoiselle de Froullay" to every one.

Madame de Froullay arrived two days after at the Hôtel de Breteuil to return the visit, and arrange that she should take Victoire to pay her respects to the Mar-

quis de Tessé, head of the De Froullays, who hardly ever came to Paris, and was known to have expressed his surprise that Mademoiselle de Froullay had not been taken to see him. Madame de Breteuil wished to consult Victoire's father before taking this important step, but he was so absorbed by Versailles life, that it was a week before he came to discuss it. The solemnity of the introduction to M. de Tessé, and of the visit to Versailles, was almost shorn of its importance by his sudden proposal to take Victoire to St. Cyr, where Madame de Maintenon was spending the day.

The poorer French nobles owed much to Madame de Maintenon. Remembering her own hard struggle with the world, she formed the plan of educating poor and well-born girls in a Christian, reasonable, and noble manner, in an institution which should not be a convent, whose spirit should be a mixture of prayer and work, and where the girls should be educated to make good wives and mothers. It was to be a plain-spoken, simple education, with abundance both of work and play in it. Madame de Maintenon spent at least every other day there, often coming as early as six o'clock in the morning, helping to dress the younger girls, teaching now one class, then another, looking on at the games, and encouraging them, counselling the mistresses, and praising or blaming the girls. "St. Cyr is my chief consolation," she would say with a sigh, in her last dreary years of Court life. There were three hundred pupils, all noble and all poor, for the noblesse of France

was growing very poor at this time, and the reforms introduced by Louvois weighed heavily upon it. Louis Quatorze had founded the Hôtel des Invalides for old and wounded officers; Madame de Maintenon founded St. Cyr for their daughters. Louvois objected, on the score of expense; the King on that of its being an unprecedented scheme. "No Queen of France ever did anything of the sort," he said. Madame de Maintenon did not care to be called Queen of France, but she was resolved to do what no acknowledged queen had done, and she succeeded. It was full time to look to the education of women. For the most part their manners were very far from being "noble or reasonable." She wrote a little book of advice for the ladies who managed St. Cyr, which tells strange tales. Girls were to beware of getting too fond of snuff, brandy, hot drinks, gambling; untidy dressing was to be shunned—there is a startling revelation of the state of morals and manners in the advice to her pupils.

To St. Cyr Victoire was now to go, and see Madame de Maintenon, where she was always seen at her best. Dinner was served, then the Marshal led the way to the chapel, and Victoire would fain have seen the rest of the château, but dared not suggest it, knowing that it would not beseem Mademoiselle de Froullay to seem like an eager little rustic out sight-seeing, and she had in mind a speech which had reached her, that good breeding forbade astonishment ever to be shown, unless the king or queen were evil spoken of. So she could

only admire the seven or eight fine rooms allotted to the Maréchal, and cast a glance at the orangery, as they went through it to his carriage. On the road to St. Cyr, the coachman suddenly stopped, and the laqueys hastened to open the carriage doors and let down the steps. "The King!" said M. de Tessé, and they all got out, and stood expectant. The royal carriage was drawn by eight horses, and the six pages who accompanied it wore that becoming sky-blue velvet livery which Louis XV. changed to a sombre shade, to the indignation of his court. A small guard of honour accompanied the king, who sat alone, leaning back in his carriage. Perceiving the Marshal and his companions, he gave orders to stop, lowered the window on their side, bowed with his grand courtesy, and drove on. Tears of emotion had filled Mademoiselle de Froullay's eyes at the sight of the king, who to her, and to his time, was something superhumanly great. "So that is the King—the great King!" she exclaimed.

"You may add, the good King, the unhappy King," answered the Maréchal de Tessé, gloomily.

For the brilliant sun of Louis Quatorze was setting fast in clouds.

The King reached St. Cyr before them, and went to walk in the gardens with the Bishop of Chartres and some of the nobles. Madame de Maintenon was sitting in a lofty wainscoted room, very simply furnished, as Victoire remarked with astonishment, fresh as she was from the luxury of the Hôtel de Breteuil. There

was no carpet on the parqueted floor, but every chair had a small piece placed before it; no gorgeous hangings, or splendid pictures; it was almost ostentatiously plain, and Madame de Maintenon's dress accorded with the rest, though it had the admirable suitableness of the costume which elderly ladies then assumed. Old ladies then had a great advantage over those of later days; they never attempted to wear dresses which resembled those of their granddaughters, and no insidious comparisons were evoked. Madame de Maintenon had a dark rich brown dress, with brown and silver leaves on it, a lace mantle lined with violet, and a high cap. Her companion chanced to be the fantastic little Duchesse du Maine, wife of Madame de Montespan's eldest son, who had married her rather than any other of the sisters of Bourbon Condé, because she was not quite so dwarfish as they. She too had the terrible Condé temper, and though she was little, was fierce, and whimsical to the utmost degree. The courtiers had dubbed this Lilliputian family "les poupées," instead of "les princesses du sang." Victoire gazed at the little crooked figure all bedizened with beads of gold round neck and arms and waist and hair, and after Madame de Maintenon had gently kissed her, and looked at her, and then resumed the interrupted conversation with the Duchesse, Mademoiselle de Froullay retired to a *pliant* beside her grandmother, who was starch and stiff on all occasions, especially when any one of whom she did not approve was

present. She whispered to Victoire that this was the Duchesse du Maine, evidently supposing that this was sufficient explanation, but not a breath of Court scandal had reached Victoire since she had been in the Hôtel du Breteuil. With all the licence and coarseness of the time, such gossip was never allowed, especially before girls, and Victoire understood as little of Madame de Montespan's history as when she was spoken of at Montivilliers. She answered audibly, "The daughter-in-law of Madame de Montespan." M. de Tessé shuddered and turned pale with apprehension, while Madame de Froullay seemed dumb with dismay. "Good heavens! how can you speak of her here?" whispered the Marshal hurriedly. "Well!" thought Victoire to herself, "I shall never understand about this Duc du Maine!"

It was almost time for the Angelus; Madame de Maintenon rose, curtseyed to all present; they rose also, and followed her to the chapel, Victoire observing as they went that at every door there was a studied little contest of politeness as to whether the Duchess or Madame de Maintenon should go first. The king entered almost at the same time that they did, and took his place in the royal tribune. He had his little three-cornered hat on, but took it off, first to bow to the altar, then to Madame de Maintenon, behind her gilded trelliss, and lastly to the Duchess, the Maréchal de Tessé and his party, who were all sitting together. The young pupils of St. Cyr raised their sweet voices, and sang

Lully's equally sweet music, to the delight of Victoire, who always retained a vivid impression of her visit to St. Cyr, and asserted that Handel stole the English national anthem from Lully,

The next time that Mademoiselle de Froullay went to Versailles, Madame de Maintenon chanced to be alone, and gave her full attention. There was a curious, unacknowledged link between them, for Victoire was great-niece of the famous Huguenot Admiral Coligny, and Françoise de Maintenon was granddaughter of the equally renowned Huguenot Captain Agrippa d'Aubigné. Victoire could never speak without violent indignation of the misfortune of possessing a traitorous Huguenot amongst her ancestors, and Madame de Maintenon had wiped out the stain of descent from the frondeur Calvinist by a systematic persecution of the party to which by birth she belonged. Her brother had grown rich through their spoils, and she sat serene in decorous cold-heartedness at Versailles. No one of course touched on such unpleasant subjects, and Victoire listened well pleased to hear gentle praises of the De Froullays, until the hour struck at which Louis Quatorze usually came to her apartment.

Madame de Froullay rose to go, but was requested to stay, as she secretly hoped and expected. The doors were thrown open; a gentleman entered and bowed silently to Madame de Maintenon, as if she were one of the royal family, she rose and advanced towards the king, who walked with difficulty, but still with that

majesty and grace which never deserted him. He bowed graciously, while she pointed to Victoire, saying, "There is a young lady whom I have taken the liberty of keeping here to present her to the king. It is needless to name her."

"I think she is a kind of god-daughter of mine," answered Louis Quatorze, "and, moreover, we are related otherwise than spiritually," and Victoire, notwithstanding all her unbounded reverence for royalty, could not help noticing, with a secret smile, how vast an honour he felt that this acknowledgment conferred on her.

"I beg the king to allow you to kiss his hand," added Madame de Froullay eagerly. Louis Quatorze held out his hand and raised Victoire's to his lips, lowering it gently, so as to make her understand that the ceremony was completed. A curious contrast to this solemn ceremony is offered to us in Horace Walpole's account of his being presented, as a boy of ten years old, to George I. Lady Walpole was quite as anxious to obtain this honour for her spoiled boy as Madame de Froullay could be to gain it for Victoire, but though the request of the prime minister's wife could not be refused, it was thought so unusual, that she was requested to bring the child after dark to St. James's, in order to attract as little attention as possible. Lady Walsingham took him to an ante-room, where he waited for some time, until, unannounced and unattended, the king entered, and the eager little eyes beheld Majesty,

attired in a dark tie-wig, an entire suit of snuff-coloured clothes, with stockings of the same shade. The boy knelt and kissed his hand, but the good-natured king took him up, kissed him, and talked to him for some time. This interview took place on the eve of the king's last journey to Hanover; and his condescension had touched his youthful subject so much that when with the other scholars of Eton college he walked in procession to the proclamation of George II., he shed a flood of tears, partly from loyalty, and partly, as he says himself, because he imagined that it became the son of a prime minister to be more concerned than other boys.

Very different was this familiar reception from the august state which environed Louis Quatorze. Mademoiselle de Froullay would have thought such want of ceremony only fit for a king of the Hanoverian dynasty. She, too, though she knew it as little as did Walpole, was seeing her sovereign for the last time.

Her slight embarrassment, when the king kissed and let fall her hand, was ended by the entrance of a gentleman, who announced the German Princess, Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, by her title of "Madame." A large red-faced woman, with a kind smile and honest eyes, strode in; she wore a sort of riding-habit, a wig and a hat exactly like the king's, and Victoire was scandalized to see that she did not remove the hat in such august company. Madame, outspoken and fearless, was a unique figure in the false and brilliant Court where she had come as a young girl from the loved Heidelberg,

which she regretted fifty years later as much as when she first left it. She would sing the German psalms of her childhood in the galleries and orangery of Versailles, read her German Bible, and express her opinion openly that there were many monks fitter to be sent to the galleys than the poor Huguenots. The king had a frank liking for the fearless woman, who made him laugh and honestly enjoyed his society, and he bore her no grudge for the unpalatable truths which she was always speaking or writing to the aunt who had brought her up at Hanover, but between her and Madame de Maintenon reigned a fierce aversion, decorously subdued and biding its time on one hand, and outrageously shown on the other. "Where the devil cannot get he sends an old woman," the princess would say apropos of the favourite, whose secret marriage with the king she ignored entirely, her German pride of rank and her honesty alike revolting from it. No wonder that when she did pay Madame de Maintenon a visit she was stiffly received. She turned abruptly to question Victoire about her great-great uncle, one Grand Prior. Victoire lost her presence of mind, and instead of explaining that she had not yet seen him, remained mute, and Madame ever after maintained her to be stupid as a carp! Mademoiselle de Froullay was delighted when her grandmother allowed her to escape to her young cousins, the Demoiselles of Lorraine, who were lunching on bread and fruit previous to seeing a performance of dancing dogs dressed up as cupids, shepherdesses, and attorneys, a medley worthy

of the absurd little court of Sceaux, where the Duchess du Maine ruled. To the great annoyance of the gay girls, their aunt, the Duchess d'Elbœuf suddenly entered, saying she was come to amuse herself too. She was one of the ill-famed house of Parabère; Victoire had never seen her before and never saw her again, for the De Froullays and De Breteuils held studiously aloof from that branch of their family. Blind, as aunts are apt to be, to the self-evident fact that her nieces wished her anywhere but among them, she seated herself at the table, and made such an ample repast on preserves and fruits and cakes, that Victoire felt it to be her natural end, when she heard, two or three years later, that Madame d'Elbœuf had died of indigestion brought on by eating too many medlars.

At last her repast was finished, and the dogs were ordered in. No one was more interested than Madame d'Elbœuf, to whom their owner especially addressed himself, exaggerating their rank, as men of his class naturally do whenever they appear before their superiors. "My august Princess," he said, pointing to one of his motley company, "this dog will tell you what year, what hour, and what day of the month it is."

"A miraculous animal!" cried the delighted Duchess, "upon my word you shall sell it to me, or I will have you driven from Versailles."

"My august Princess, he can also tell women's ages."

"Ah! nasty brute!" exclaimed Madame d'Elbœuf, louder than before; and bestowing such a hearty kick

on the poor animal that it shrank behind the others, and could not be coaxed to resume its part. "Turn it out —take it away—shut it up!"

Her terror at the possible indiscretion of the learned dog reconciled the girls to her invasion of their luncheon party.

A few days after this visit to Versailles, all the noblesse went into deep mourning for the death of the Duc de Berry. "We observed our mourning more strictly than did his wife," dryly observes Mademoiselle de Froullay. Soon followed the death of the king himself, in a dreary old age, shorn of glory, deserted by success; amusement touched him no more, and scandals in the royal family, which might be traced back to his own conduct, wrung his heart. "I would fain suffer more. Great God, receive my repentance," were his last audible words. Germany and Italy assumed Court mourning for upwards of a year, refraining from keeping carnival during two winters, and closing all theatres, but the newly-made widow of the Duc de Berry, although closely related to the king by marriage, seemed to take a pleasure in defying common decency, and gave balls and entertainments at the Luxembourg palace, and gathered round her the worst of the noblesse.

It was an evil omen for the new reign, inaugurated by the little king's appearance on his lit de justice with leading-strings of cloth of gold, and bright brown curls floating on his shoulders. Such as he was then, such he

remained all his life—a child in leading-strings, only without the innocence of childhood.

Mademoiselle de Froullay's mind began to be too much taken up with her personal affairs for those of the nation to occupy it particularly. Young as she was, every one treated her as entirely grown-up, and during her first winter at the Hôtel de Breteuil one of those events occurred which turn a girl into a woman. The De Breteuils were deeply interested in the Jacobite party, with which they were connected through Lady Laura and her mother. On one occasion the Pretender slept at the hotel, disguised as an abbé. Every one admired his good looks, except Mademoiselle de Preuilly, who showed her discernment by differing from all the rest, and taking the side of William of Orange, which Victoire chose to believe was done to pique the handsome Lord George Keith, "Milord Maréchal," as they all called him, who came on a political mission, and met the leaders of the Stuart party at the Hôtel de Breteuil. He was a handsome young man, and Victoire a pretty girl, dark-eyed and fair-haired. Madame de Breteuil thought that he might give Victoire a few lessons in Spanish, which was familiar to him, and as the lessons were taken before some twenty people in the salon, probably the aunt thought that Cupid would be afraid to approach. The two sat on their *pliants*, and read and talked too, unnoticed except by Emilie, who looked on with angry, jealous eyes, and

sought to attract the attention of the rest to Victoire and her Milord Maréchal, who was doing his best to deepen her aversion for the house of Nassau, and to call forth her sympathy for the Jacobites—especially himself. He taught her, amongst other things, what blank verse was, by translating into it a charming quatrain which his father had made for him,—

> "Quand vos yeux, en naissant, s'ouvraient à la lumière,
> Chacun vous souriait, mon fils, et vous pleuriez.
> Vivez si bien, qu'un jour, à votre dernière heure,
> Chacun verse des pleurs, et qu'on vous voit sourire."

Mademoiselle de Froullay was delighted with it, as many people may have been before her, for the charming quatrain, which Lord George's father composed for him, is from the Persian.

He amused his willing audience with stories against the court of William, and his adherents, and related, amongst other stories, which seem so old, that one wonders if they were ever new, how a Dutch heiress, having fled with an "Orangist" Englishman, her parents had advertised in the papers that if she refused to return to her sorrowful family, they hoped that at least she would send back the key of the tea-chest. Victoire laughed so much at this, that Emilie, who could not hear what they were saying, believed they were making game of her, all unawares how little space she filled in their thoughts, and made herself so conspicuously disagreeable, that Lord George decided to ask Victoire's hand on the spot. He had received

ample encouragement some weeks before, when, after many timid glances and faltering tones on either side, he drew his *pliant* close to hers, and whispered, "If I dared to love you, could you pardon it."—"I should be charmed," she answered, and both were silent, and for the next six weeks were perfectly content to gaze enraptured at each other, without a word of love-making, unsuspected and untroubled. Emilie alone spied out the little idyl carried on in the De Breteuil salon, and could not even console herself by her favourite boast of the beauty of her family arms, since an unlucky day when she had asserted the "barrilets" in them to be barrels of powder, and Victoire promptly reminded her that in that case the family arms were of very modern date indeed.

The proposal was formally laid before M. de Froullay, the Marquise, and the aunt on the second floor, and the reason of Victoire's violent aversion to her peeps out when we hear that she it was who opposed the marriage, because Lord George was a Protestant. No one had guessed it—Victoire least of all. She entirely acquiesced in the impossibility of the alliance, but she never could forgive her aunt, who first said the same thing. She submitted with dignity to what was inevitable, though, in her old age, she still shuddered to remember how keen the pang of that parting had been when Lord George hurried away from Paris, and plunged into wild political schemes which caused him speedily to be outlawed, as he

wrote, for Victoire's information, to Madame de Breteuil.

Very many years after, the two met again, aged and white-haired, each having lived through a long life, full of trouble and change, but neither had forgotten the other. The first sharp pain had changed into a sweet and tender recollection; Victoire had been deeply attached to the Marquis de Créquy, whom she married a year or two after those Spanish lessons in the Hôtel de Breteuil came to an end; but, "on revient toujours à ses premiers amours" was true in this case, and, with tears in their eyes, the aged couple retraced those days between which and their meeting lay a lifetime. "Are you going back to the King of Prussia?" Victoire asked at last, wistfully; "will you never be of my faith? Are we to be parted eternally?" and her heart leaped with joy when he told her that he had loved her too well not to wish to hold the same faith as herself. She was too much touched to question the value of such a motive for a conversion.

She had had one gift from him during their brief love-making; a rose noble, with the figure of an armed knight upon it, holding the flower from which the coin took its name. Lord George declared that the Chevalier de St. George (the Pretender) had sent it to Mademoiselle de Froullay, and she was allowed to accept it. The weight and beauty of the gold-piece was much admired, and reached the ears of a relation, Madame d' Urfé, who had a passion for alchemy, and ruined herself by

putting her fortune into the crucibles of all the impostors of the day. She persuaded the aunt on the second floor, who seemed destined to annoy Victoire on every possible occasion, to insist on exchanging a jewelled reliquary for the rose noble, which she wanted to melt. Victoire allowed that the jewels were genuine, but questioned the authenticity of the relic. Poor child, her noble was worth so much more than any relics to her! All the family became interested in the matter; even Madame de Froullay begged and urged Victoire to give up the coin, whose purity might lead to such great results in the crucible. She yielded—she could not tell the reason why her rose noble was invaluable to her, and it crystallized into pentagonal prisms, with which result Madame d'Urfé was perfectly satisfied.

Poor Victoire! Perhaps her favourite aunt was a little less blind than the rest, for though usually silent and cautious, she said, with indignation very grateful to her niece, "That is a lost woman! her head is turned, and her fortune will be blown away by the four winds."

Family attention was withdrawn from Mademoiselle de Froullay by the sudden outbreak of duels amongst the noblesse, in one of which a promising young De Breteuil was killed. The best of the nobles had always discouraged them, and when they were most in fashion the brave Marquis de Fénélon, equally admirable, as the great Condé declared, in war and society, formed an association of gentlemen who took a vow never to

accept a challenge. Richelieu put down duels with inexorable severity; Louis Quatorze showed the utmost disfavour to both challenged and challenger, and for many years no blood had been wasted in such encounters. But six weeks after the king's death, two young officers in the Gardes Françaises fought in open daylight, under the windows of the Tuileries, about an Angora cat. The Regent summoned them before him, and told them that, considering the subject of the dispute, it would have been fitter to use their nails than their swords. They were dismissed from their regiment, and spent a fortnight in prison, and since no worse came of it, the Duc de Richelieu challenged the Count Emmanuel of Bavaria on some equally futile pretext on the road to Chantilly, and although the duel was stopped, the bad example was set; the nobles perceived that the Regent could not hold them in, and the interminable disorder of that infamous time multiplied daily. It was a proof of the laxity of morals, that so long as a man was of high birth, whatever his character, he was welcome as a son-in-law. That model of propriety, Madame de Maintenon herself, had given her charming ward, Mademoiselle de Marçay, a girl of thirteen, to the Comte de Caylus, of whom his wife remarked, a few years afterwards, that his death had rejoiced every one, since he had long drunk away all his senses. There was a certain Prince Charles Roger de Courtenay, nearly related to Madame de Bauffremont, who was known to be penniless, while living as if

he possessed millions, and to whose rank every noble family in France was eager to sacrifice a daughter. Victoire was offered to him, but he rejected her, because he disliked fair hair and dark eyes. She was glad to escape the alliance; but was considerably piqued when he married Geneviève de Bretagne, who was small, dark, and plain, and not much richer than herself. The De Breteuils had been but careless guardians of their niece's happiness, and were anxious to see her safely married. She saw everything in a clear, unromantic light, knew that it was her destiny, as heiress of her family, and never dreamed of objecting. If we rarely hear of forced marriages, it was because girls were trained to absolute submission.

The daughter of the Duc de Richelieu was one of the few instances of resistance; she was passionately attached to the young Comte de Gisors, and family friends took pity on her and pleaded her cause. "They can meet in society," was the Duc's answer, and Septimanie de Richelieu married the very noble and very tedious Comte Egmont and his titles, and died heart-broken and calumniated in early youth. Mademoiselle de Froullay was not capable of such deep affection. Her mind was well-balanced and calm, and though she had not forgotten "Milord Maréchal," it was with interest, rather than despair, that she heard her grandmother casually observe, "Sweetheart, I hear a talk of your being married." She did not look at her granddaughter, and abruptly turned the conversa-

tion. Victoire was grateful, and wondered when she should hear more. She looked on marriage as a matter which concerned her family more than herself, since Lord George could not be her husband. The day after Madame de Froullay had given this discreet hint, Victoire received the unusual honour of a visit from her father. "My child," he said, after a little talk, "a marriage is in question for you, which seems to me very suitable; attend, I beg, to what your aunt will tell you about it," and he did not add another word on the subject. Two more days passed; Victoire could ask nothing, and waited till Madame de Breteuil thought fit to speak. Madame de Breteuil seemed but a lukewarm advocate, or else she began by proposing the suitor whom she did *not* wish her niece to accept. Had Victoire ever remarked M. de Laval de Bois-dauphin? "He would not dislike marrying you," she added, in a tone which instantly made Victoire aware that her aunt was not in favour of the match.

"And I should be inconsolable if he did!" Victoire answered.

"I am not at all surprised," said Madame Breteuil. "You may feel sure that I shall never mention the matter again. You have another suitor, whom you have never seen, and who has never seen you. Your grandmother thinks that you might meet without embarrassment on either side, in the convent parlour at Panthemont. A young man of extremely high birth, head of his family—you have only to open the 'History of the

Great Officers of the Crown,' to see what the De Créquys are."

"Oh, my aunt! I know that genealogy," answered Victoire, recalling some of her studies at Montivilliers very appositely. It is a brilliant family, the only one in Europe mentioned in a capitolary of Charlemagne's. There have been Cardinals and Marshals among them; Dukes of Lesdiguières and Champsaur, Princes of Montlaur and Pois . . . How is it that this one is not a duke?"

"Probably he does not care about it," answered Madame de Breteuil. "Since the last creations titles are not supposed to mean anything. There is nothing to mark nobility and make an honourable distinction but names now-a-days. MM. de Créquy have always received the title of cousins from the King, and naturally they have the same privileges as dukes and peers, with the hereditary honours of the Louvre, and all the rest. It is a rank which they owe purely to birth, not royal favour. The last kings have flung ermine mantles on so many unworthy shoulders!"

Whether Mademoiselle de Froullay would have asked any questions as to the looks or character of her suitor, cannot be told; Emilie de Preuilly came in, Madame de Breteuil put her finger on her lips, and Victoire was silent.

There was no question for Mademoiselle de Preuilly of a great marriage like that of her cousin, and as her father belonged only to the noblesse de robe, she could not accompany Victoire in her visits to Versailles, but mathematics had at least done one thing for her, she

was unusually indifferent—culpably so in most people's eyes—to such privileges. Her mind was really too full of her studies to allow her to care about them ; but she was keen-sighted enough to see that something was now going on with regard to Mademoiselle de Froullay, whose grandmother arrived the next day, and said, with unusual affection, "*Ma toute belle!* put on your new flowered dress to-morrow, and be ready punctually at eleven o'clock. You might put knots of ribbon in that fair hair of yours; I will send you some of amaranth and dark green."

Victoire was not in mourning, like other people; we shall see why, later.

"We are going to pay Mesdames at Panthemont a visit, and I have promised to take you. Good-night, my queen," she added.

"Will you not take me, too," asked Mademoiselle de Preuilly, who had come into the room.

Madame de Froullay hesitated an instant, and answered at last, "Certainly, ma charmante," with a look of vexation. Victoire could not imagine why it mattered whether the divine Emilie accompanied them or not, except that she never wished for her company, but Madame de Froullay thought her decidedly *de trop*. She had seen her own husband through a convent-grating for the first time, and wished that all should pass on this occasion precisely as it did then.

The Cardinal de Noailles readily gave a permit which allowed them to enter the convent, and pay their respects

to the Abbess, the Coadjutrice, the Prioress, and Mad
de Mothe-Guyon, imprisoned there by lettre de ca
in her old age. The Prioress was a De Créquy L
quières, and it had been arranged that M. de Cré
should happen to call and see her, which would b
him into the parlour, while the Duchesse de Valenti
was to come in and ask to see Madame de Froullay. T
the Marquis and Victoire would be on either side of
grating at the same moment, without any indeco
admission of the real reason for the interview. E
one knew in such cases that a marriage was in view,
every one talked as if the young lady and her fri
had come to the convent to spend a short time in pr
and retreat. When such an affair happened to
through, they stayed a few days among the nuns,
no one was supposed to know anything about a wor
motive in the visit. There is a whole history of
decent hypocrisy of French society at this time in tl
arrangements.

M. de Créquy arrived, and was admitted to the
lour. Madame de Valentinois duly appeared, and as
to see her good friends, who, she had heard, had c
for a retreat to Panthemont. They came to the grat
and conversed through it, while M. de Créquy was d
the same with his cousin. He looked several times, "
a very noble air," towards Victoire, but so discreetly
she was sure Mademoiselle de Preuilly suspected noth
This was very gratifying to Mademoiselle de Froul
who was delighted with the want of penetration of

"divine Emilie," as she spitefully loves to call her cousin whom Voltaire had so named. Victoire, on her part, saw very well that M. de Créquy had beautiful blue eyes and dark hair, and made up her mind at once to accept him. He was a better *parti* undoubtedly than Prince Charles Roger, and it was impossible to marry Milord Maréchal, who was in Scotland, doing his best to get himself beheaded for high treason.

Custom required that the ladies should withdraw first. No sooner were they gone than M. de Créquy made the startling declaration to his cousin, the Prioress, that nothing should induce him to marry Mademoiselle de Froullay, who looked like an ill-tempered boy! He knew all that he should lose in wealth, and in the nobility of his children, by preferring her cousin, but his wife must be one to whom he could give undivided love. The Bishop of Rennes must be asked to lay the matter before M. de Breteuil.

Great was the Prioress's consternation—great the perplexity! Victoire de Froullay a second time rejected! Victoire like an ill-tempered boy! The De Créquys marry into the noblesse de robe! It was enough to distract any one, especially a nun who, having renounced worldly matters on her own account, was the more free to devote herself to them for others. Madame de Breteuil cleared up the mystery; she seems to have loved her niece better than her daughter, and guessed at once that there was a mistake between the two cousins. This came of taking two young ladies on such

an occasion! Madame de Froullay's previsions were ju fied, but she could hardly be pacified when she he the explanation. "It is his fault—all M. de Créq fault," she cried. "You will allow that, I hope? niece, De Preuilly, was in deep mourning for the K and of course it was clear—it was plain, that her mot must be living. My granddaughter, De Froullay, w a brocade with coloured flowers, and what could t mean but that she had lost her mother, and, theref could not wear Court mourning? One would say t even the most sensible men now-a-days . . . . . N could I have believed such a thing of the Marquis Créquy!"

And to all attempts at mollifying her she would c repeat, "Say if you like that Emilie does not look younger, and that the Marquis had something els think of than whether they wore mourning or col —what then? Was the mistake my fault, pray? is M. de Créquy's fault—it is his fault, his, and tha no one else!" Madame de Froullay could not par the cross-purposes in which her well-arranged sche had ended. Victoire and M. de Créquy had mar laugh over his mistake, and the anger of her gra mother, but there was no idyl in this courtship, tho the marriage turned out happy and honourable. T had ample time to know each other well beforeh for at least eight months were spent in discussions arrangements between the two great houses. Vict had to make the acquaintance of the magnific

Duchesse Marguerite de Lesdiguières, at whose house the ceremony was to take place, and then at the last moment the marriage was unexpectedly delayed, just when the approach of Lent made it indispensable to hasten, by the announcement of Victoire's bête noire, the Countess on the second floor, that she was about to espouse the old Marquis de Vieuville. It really was too bad to interfere with Victoire's matrimonial prospects for a second time! Every one felt that aunt and niece could not be married at the same time without a shade of that ridicule so abhorrent to the French. Madame de Breteuil St. Croix must take precedence, and as in those days great people paid some respect to the season of Lent, Mademoiselle de Froullay and her Marquis must wait till Easter, however impatient M. de Créquy might be.

There was the consolation that their marriage was incomparably the more brilliant and imposing. The Cardinal de Rohan Soubise celebrated it, and the Cardinal of Luxembourg volunteered to assist him, which was considered as an unheard-of honour; and besides this, by dint of persecuting the Cardinal de Noailles for a whole fortnight, Madame de Froullay had induced him to send the Holy Cross Palatine to the Hôtel de Lesdiguières, as the presence of this precious relic at the nuptials would assure prosperity and happiness to the young couple. The Croix Palatine had been bequeathed by Richelieu to Notre Dame, and not only was precious from the gold and jewels which composed

it, but was filled with relics obtained from innumerable shrines by the all-powerful Cardinal. His Eminence of Noailles had grave scruples as to letting it leave the cathedral under any pretext, but the arguments brought to bear on him were strong, and Madame de Froullay persistent. "Is it possible to do enough for M. de Créquy, the last of his house?" she urged. He yielded, and sent the precious reliquary, escorted by six canons of Notre Dame, who were pledged not to take their eyes off it. It reached the chapel of the Hôtel de Lesdiguières, borne under a canopy, with drums beating, forty grenadiers around it, and a vast crowd following, overflowing with veneration for the Croix Palatine, and indignation against the Duchesse de Berry, who had met the solemn procession as she dashed by in her carriage, with her squadron of cymbaliers around her, and instead of silencing them, and alighting, as custom required, had looked another way, and declined to perceive it. So great was the scandal caused by her conduct, that the Regent for once rebuked her, and dismissed the cymbaliers.

And so Victoire and her marquis go their way to begin their joint life under the discreet chaperonage of Madame de Froullay. It would not have been considered decorous had they set up an establishment without an elder relative to superintend it. From this time an element of fable mingles visibly with the memoirs of Madame de Créquy, perhaps interpolated by another hand. Madame de Créquy probably wrote the main

part herself. Husbands figure but little in the memoirs or salons of the eighteenth century. A stranger once asked the celebrated Madame Geofferin what had become of the old gentleman who used always to appear at her dinners. "It was my husband; he is dead," replied the widow, calmly. Madame de Créquy would not have allowed her husband to act this secondary part, but we gain no distinct impression from her ten volumes of memoirs of Louis Marie, Marquis de Créquy, Prince de Montlaur, Sovereign Count of Orlamunde, and representative of a dozen high dignities besides. The Duc de Richelieu was one of his chosen companions, but he himself appears to have been an honourable man, worthy of his noble name. Victoire loved him well for thirty years, and did not remarry when his death left her still young and much sought after. She left the reputation of being a firm sensible woman, saying very witty things, and leading a spotless life in the worst period of French history. Her memoirs are a curious study of the haughty pride which believed the world created for the nobles,—pride, which M. Taine remarks, can only be equalled by that of an English merchant.*

It should be distinctly understood that the memoirs of Madame de Créquy partake strongly of the nature of the *fabliau*. They have at least the merit of wonder-

* "Vous voyez là, un caractère qui ne pouvait se produire que dans une page dont le commerce embrasse le monde, où les négociants sont des potentats, où une compagnie des marchands a exploité des continents, soutenu des guerres, défait des royaumes, et fondé un empire de cent millions d'hommes. L'orgueil d'un tel homme n'est pas petit, il est terrible; il est si tranquil et si fort."

ful *vraisemblance*, and only such portions of them have been used in this little sketch as are confirmed by contemporary writers; but there are so many anachronisms in the memoirs, as a whole, that they stand on different ground to the other sketches given here. As a true picture of "Daily Life among the Great," they are, however, valuable, and there is no doubt, as French critics have said of them, "un petit noyau de vérité là dedans."

A POOR DEPENDANT.

Hélas ! on voit que de tout temps
Les petits ont pâti des sottises des grands.

LAFONTAINE.

A POOR DEPENDANT.

A chiel's amang ye, takin' notes,
And, faith! he'll prent it.—BURNS.

THE eighteenth century in France—though women stand out as far more conspicuous and triumphant figures than men in its history—was an evil time for such as were poor, well born, undowered, and without inclination for convent life, as was found by the poor victim of Madame de Maintenon and St. Cyr, Elise de Maisonfort. Marriage or a convent were almost the only alternatives for women. Those who declined both had a hard battle with a hard world, and suffered so keenly, that one whose life was even sadder than that of Mademoiselle de Maisonfort, declared the only happy years which she ever knew after early girlhood, to be those spent as a prisoner in the Bastille.

This one was Marguerite Jeanne Cordier, or Delaunay. She has left us the picture of her life in a brief, remarkable memoir, written in the clear, sententious style of one who had studied La Bruyère.

It tells of a new epoch: that depicted by the light and facile pens of Madame de Sévigné, Madame de Caylus, and Madame de Lafayette had ended before Jeanne Delaunay gave the story of her life to the world.

As she says herself, this life was the exact reverse of those romances where the shepherdess is discovered, in the end, to be a princess. In childhood she reigned supreme over all around; but a few years later she found herself struggling with the world, poor and plain, and though she had that inexplicable gift of fascination, which is quite independent of beauty, and even more powerful, those whom it attracted she could not love, while it failed to win her the one heart which she prized.

For some reason, which she never learned, her father was obliged to leave France about 1783.* He was an artist, unknown to fame, of the name of Cordier. Her mother, a young and pretty woman, after spending a short time with him in England, returned to France, and resumed her maiden name of Delaunay, by which her infant daughter was always known. Madame Delaunay found her youth, her beauty, and her child, three burdens which made her thankful to be received, out of charity, in the Norman convent of St. Sauveur. Here were two ladies, Mesdames de Grieu, who had been appointed as abbesses to other convents by Louis XIV.; but difficulties having risen, they had retired to

* The date is given by some of her biographers as 1793, but incorrectly.

St. Sauveur, waiting until King and Pope should have settled the dispute. They grew very fond of the little girl, whose mother's sad position was well known, and treated her as a pet and plaything, and, lastly, as an adopted child. Madame de la Rochefoucauld, Abbess of St. Sauveur, also took a fancy to her, though the little Jeanne very nearly lost her good graces altogether, by stepping on the paw of an invalid dog. Madame de la Rochefoucauld had a sort of asylum for sick dogs; an animal which had the mange, or fits, or was lame, at once gained her affections and a place in her rooms; but she would have nothing to say to those which were handsome or healthy, declaring they would never want for friends. It was on the paw of one of these invalids that Jeanne trod, and its angry howls made the abbess turn round with so indignant a countenance, that some one hastily whispered to the child to beg pardon. Only half understanding, she knelt down before the injured animal and lisped out a humble excuse, which turned Madame de la Rochefoucauld's anger to laughter, and made the little offender almost as great a favourite as if she too had been a sick dog.

Being always with grown-up people, the convent pet naturally seemed surprisingly intelligent for her age; she had neither stories nor fairy tales to read; but she picked up facts from sacred and profane history, and her ready quotations delighted her listeners, who would not part with her when Madame Delaunay found a situation as governess in some great family. Mesdames

de Grieu's friends used their influence at Court to have their affairs prosperously settled, and there was a great deal of mysterious discussion about it at St. Sauveur's, where most of the nuns were to be kept in ignorance of the intrigues going on. The little Delaunay, however, was often present at the discussions which went on among those initiated. The outsiders often questioned her, but, with premature discretion, she only played with her doll and seemed not to understand. To Mesdames de Grieu, however, she boldly prophesied that nothing would be settled until she was seven years old. "Children and fools both prophesy sometimes," she remarks, apropos of this, in her Memoirs, with the dryness which characterizes her, "because both speak at hap-hazard." The chance words came true on this occasion. The elder sister was appointed to the poor little Priory of St. Louis when Jeanne was seven years old, and took her favourite there with her. The younger one never attained any dignity, and accompanied them. Madame Delaunay was rejoiced to know her child provided for, at least, temporally, for she was now a widow, and could hardly maintain herself. The orphan Jeanne had hardly understood that she possessed a father; but she wept for his loss, and then wondered why. Probably she felt it was expected of her.

St. Louis was a little kingdom, where she reigned absolutely, as only a sovereign of seven years old could. She lived in the Abbess's rooms, and had four persons

devoted to her service. Even Madame de Grieu's young nieces were obliged, though indignantly, to submit to her caprices, and the blind tenderness with which she was treated taught her a kind of indifference to the feelings of those about her, which in after days she felt as a crime. "It taught me to excuse the faults of the great," she would say, "showing me how easily one learns to suppose everything created for oneself." Mesdames de Grieu had an allowance from their families, and spent it on masters and pleasures for this child, who loved them as a child loves, unconscious of the sacrifices made for it, taking all kindness as a matter of course, while she brought, as only a child can, light and life into the faded lives around her.

Convent life had an effect on Jeanne which it by no means always has; she was filled with strong religious feeling, and spent so much time in prayer and serious reading, that the Abbess, with much good sense, feared the effect on so young and delicate a child, and sought to moderate her zeal. The slight check only inflamed it more, and, in the height of her self-devotion, she secretly cut off the abundant long hair, the arrangement of which occupied much precious time daily. Once done, the loss remained a stern fact. Regret slipped in; the saving of time failed to console her for the sacrifice, and she realized that a deed which cannot be undone is a grave matter. A fear of doing anything irretrievable now possessed her, and her fancy that she should take the veil as soon as possible, gave

[illegible] of the [illegible]. She [illegible] from everything [illegible] with it—shrank from meditation and [illegible] and [illegible] romances instead from [illegible] than herself. She had just reached an age when romances opened a new and enchanting [illegible] to her. Madame de Grieu's watchful care saved her from this new danger. Jeanne had been trained to [illegible]—it was always one of her most marked [illegible]—so she had no wish to hide her new pleasure from her motherly friend, who tried to explain the perils of such reading for her, and bade her borrow no more romances. She obeyed, and so implicitly, that she would not let her companions tell her the end of the one which she had returned unfinished, though interested in it as only a young girl can be whose one outlet into the world is through books.

While at St. Louis, she formed a friendship which influenced her whole life, and through which she was to feel the greatest sweetness and the keenest pain which ever fell to her lot. Mademoiselle de Silly, a girl older then herself, came to St. Louis just when, after four or five years spent in learning accomplishments for which she had no turn, and going through the usual routine of a girl's education, Jeanne was beginning to long for deeper teaching. The kind Abbess had taught her all she could, and procured masters for music and dancing; but what sufficed for the child could not satisfy an eager young girl, and Mademoiselle de Silly, cultivated and sensible, with much love of study, and calm, gentle

manners, absolutely bewitched Jeanne, who tried to enter into whatever interested her friend, and desired only to pass her life with her. Jeanne even plunged into Descartes' philosophy, following it out enthusiastically, and understanding it fairly well with her fresh young mind, to which hard study was a positive delight, and a head as yet occupied and fatigued by no other interests. She was totally absorbed by this study for a considerable time, until it suddenly struck her that this search after truth was fast leading her into infidelity. Just as she had renounced novel-reading when she understood that it was doing her harm, so she now wrenched herself away from her new delight, owned that she had no means of fairly testing the truth or falsehood of Descartes' system, and resigned the study. Although the older mind of her fellow-student had not felt the danger as the younger one did, Mademoiselle de Silly entirely approved, and showed herself on this occasion and many others a wise friend.

After all, Jeanne was only a young girl, and girlish fancies and follies contrasted curiously with her keen self-restraint and candour. She came, soon after she had abandoned philosophy, in anxious confusion, to make a new confession to her much-amused friend. A niece of Madame de Grieu's had paid several visits to St. Louis with her lover, and Jeanne instantly perceived that something very like a scene out of a romance was being enacted before her, looked on, and observed with

keen interest, and related whatever she saw or guessed to her friend. Mademoiselle de Silly was not too old or too sensible to be entertained, but wisely turned a careless ear when Jeanne confessed that since the Chevalier de R—— came no more to the parloir, she felt unaccountably miserable, and could think of nothing but his lute-playing and his conversation. Mademoiselle de Silly calmly replied, that she need not be anxious, for she had no real wish to marry the Chevalier. Marry him! The very suggestion was like a cold shower-bath; Jeanne had only been unconsciously weaving something no more substantial than "the airy fabric of a dream," and like a dream it vanished, leaving for its sole effect a strong love for the lute and guitar.

She was a mere girl at this time, but marriages were then contracted at a very early age; and she attracted a M. Brunel, a sensible middle-aged man, who came nearly every afternoon to the convent parloir, at first simply for the pleasure of conversing with the agreeable Mademoiselle de Silly. Jeanne loved and admired her friend with such vehemence, that to find M. Brunel liked herself the better of the two, was no passport to her favour. Still, his attentions pleased her so long as he asked nothing in return, but he never was more to her than a steady friend.

Mademoiselle de Silly was obliged to go to Paris for a short time, and this separation was the first grief that Jeanne had known. A sort of despair took possession of her, and, frightened by the strength of her own feel-

ings, she forced herself to study, and fixed on geometry as the best thing to occupy her mind, as requiring undivided attention, since the best way of calming a troubled mind is not to struggle with the cause of its sufferings, but to give it new interests.

Heavier anxieties were at hand. St. Louis, always a poor convent, became poorer; times were bad, and famine raised the price of all provisions. The nuns had hardly enough to eat, and naturally looked on Jeanne as a superfluous expense. Their complaints reached the Archbishop of Rouen, who ordered Madame de Grieu to give up her post or send away her favourite. It was a hard case, but love for her adopted child proved stronger than ambition, and she offered to resign her dignity of Abbess, and pay for their joint maintenance. Even this was ungraciously objected to, and many letters passed on the subject between her and her ecclesiastical superiors. She was no scribe, and charged Jeanne with writing her letters, a training in correspondence which was afterwards very useful. Mademoiselle de Silly returned, consoled the poor Abbess, and helped her to calculate her expenses, and all was at length settled satisfactorily.

For some years St. Louis continued to be a peaceful and happy home to Jeanne, but there was always the anxious thought haunting the ex-Abbess of what would become of Mademoiselle Delaunay at her death. She had nothing to leave her, and saw that she had no vocation for a nun's life, even if a sum sufficient to enable her

to enter on it could have been scraped together. Dowerless women were as difficult to dispose of in convents as in marriage. Kind friends were not wanting: friends always rallied round Jeanne, but never those who had the power to help her. M. de Rey, a married and honourable man, whom she knew but slightly, offered to secure her a competence from his own fortune, adding that, to protect her against gossip, should it be known, he would solemnly promise never to see her again, and the lively Abbé Vertot, who admired her talents extremely, made almost the same offer. She trusted M. de Rey as much as she distrusted the gay Abbé, but her good sense told her that, though her friends did not object, she ought not to be beholden to either. She retained both as friends, and always preserved that tenacious affection for M. de Rey with which she regarded any one who had ever been dear to her. She never could acquire that art of forgetting, which comes so easily to most people.

Hitherto, Mademoiselle Delaunay had spent her life within the walls of St. Louis; the first break in its peaceful flow was caused by an invitation to the Château of Silly, whither her friend had returned. The kind Abbess readily consented to let her go, and she found herself an inmate of a lonely Norman château, somewhat old and gloomy, like its owner, the Marquis, a silent and niggardly man, with a polite, cold-mannered wife. Few visitors came to Silly; Jeanne scarcely made a new acquaintance during the five or six months which

she spent there. The one carriage was seldom used; all was monotony, economy, and stiff piety in the château. Jeanne, fearless and gay, pleased her entertainers: she was happy, and showed it. Youth and the company of her friend made Silly delightful to her, and she looked forward to returning in the following summer, when the son of the house was expected home. Taken prisoner in the battle of Hochstedt, he had been long a captive in England, and his merits and prowess were so continually dwelt on at Silly, that already, in Jeanne's eyes, he was a sort of ideal hero, whose very name made the heart beat quicker. Moreover, he was the brother of her friend, and that alone, she thought, proved him to be "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best" of men. The warm welcome which she received on going back to St. Louis touched her; she was growing old enough to value the unfailing love of the Mesdames de Grieu. M. de Rey, too, showed great pleasure at her return; but she suspected that he had learned to dispense with her in some measure, for, when she went, as of old, to visit friends living near, though he never failed to escort her back to the convent, instead of taking the longest way through the *Place*, he now crossed it! She applied the geometrical principles which she had learned, and decided that his liking for her must be diminished by at least the difference of the diagonal to the two sides of the square.

This return to St. Louis was only an interlude between two visits to Silly. She returned there before

the arrival of the young M. de Silly, but already he seemed to pervade everything. All was eager expectation. His carriage was seen approaching, and all the family hurried out to meet him, Jeanne, a little behind the rest, with a sudden sense of being but a stranger; she was only in time to see him coming up the great flight of steps leading to the house; he paused to give an order, and she was struck with his calm and chilling air, and a certain distinguished look, which she had never seen in any visitor at St. Louis. To her surprise and vexation, and to that of his sister, he lived chiefly in his own rooms, reading books which he had brought with him, and seldom appearing, except at meal-times. The admiration which Jeanne had always met with, ill-prepared her for this neglect, and, had he wished to excite a wish to please him, he could not have devised a better plan. But he simply did not think about her, until he chanced to hear her discussing him with his sister, while the two walked in the woods of Silly. Their severe criticisms amused him, and, when they returned to the château, he confessed his eaves-dropping, adding, that they had abused him in good earnest. "One could not jest when vexed with you," Mademoiselle Delaunay answered, and the naïve reply pleased the man of the world. He joined the two girls frequently after this time, read and walked with them, and encouraged Jeanne to talk freely to him, listening with a pleased attention that was only too sweet and flattering. She looked much younger than

she was; he never thought seriously about her, but, as for her—a girl thrown suddenly and entirely into the society of a man who, at Silly, and Silly was her world, was "the admired of all beholders"—what could happen, except that she should unconsciously give away her heart? No one guarded or warned her—not Mademoiselle de Silly, who thought it a matter of course that every one should admire her brother; not the mother, absorbed in the desire to amuse her son and make his home attractive to him, and ready to sacrifice anyone or anything with this object. On one occasion, when Mademoiselle de Silly was ill, the usual walk was on the point of being given up, but the mother bade Jeanne accompany her son, careless of the breach of etiquette incurred in sending them out *tête-à-tête.* He, perhaps, had some inkling of Jeanne's feelings, for he evidently wished to avoid it. Jeanne's pride was up in arms, and her chief wish, for the moment, was to assure him that he need not fear he was gaining her affections. M. de Silly walked on, silent and embarrassed; she began to talk at once, and launched into science, which lasted them until they got home. The girl had outwitted the man; he was reassured, and gave himself up without fear to a pleasant intimacy, which was invaluable in the dull life of Château Silly. She was never sure whether, at any time, he guessed her secret. Long afterwards, his sister told her that he had felt something for her that was almost love, but, fearing his own inconstancy, had

checked himself. This cold prudence was very unlike the attachment with which he had inspired the poor child, who hid her secret bravely, ready to do anything that could add to his happiness, even to urging the visit of a fancied rival, and yet suffering, with the passionate pain which older people would smile at, and which, nevertheless, is a terrible reality, from every little slight or mark of preference given to another. To him she must have seemed merely a charming girl, with a flattering liking for his society. To her, he was life itself. The love which she had felt for the sister was tenfold intensified for the brother; and he was so kind, so gentle, she thought—talked so well, was so thoughtful for her—that she scarcely missed the heavenly flame which was absent. Once, when she had been wounded by his long private conferences with his sister, from which she was excluded, he perceived that she was hurt, and stopped her as she was hurrying to Madame de Silly's room, pretending not to see him walking up and down the hall, deep in thought. She could not but pause. He led her to a seat, and told her what had occupied him, with a full and friendly confidence which made amends for all the past pain. She absolutely had no separate life from his,—if he were sad, so was she, and his brightening spirits at once raised hers. M. de Silly was not a good man—far from it; and her knowledge of his offences, and indifference to them, speak volumes of the laxity of morals. Contemporaries say that he was cold, selfish,

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and madly ambitious, and even deny him the praise of good looks; but he probably turned a different side of his character to Grimm and St. Simon than to Jeanne. It matters little whether what she loved was the real man or the dream of her own creation. It is certain that he dealt honourably by the unprotected girl, and did not seek to win her heart. She gave it unawares, and if it were a crime, she expiated it by long years of a dull-grey life, in which the only thing that she cared for was to hear the name of the man who had passed out of it.

Business called M. de Silly away from the château. She fully realized what her feelings were when he left them; saw his eyes rest upon her more inquiringly than tenderly as he consoled his weeping sister, and bade him a calm farewell. But, when he was out of sight, she felt as if her life had come to an end.

Such a character as Mademoiselle Delaunay's, with its mingled weakness and austere self-control, its stubborn fidelity and its power of dumb endurance, is not common at any time—so uncommon in the hard and brilliant 18th century, that we may well dwell on it at some length in a study of that period.

M. de Silly returned after a time, but few meet exactly as they parted. He was sombre and preoccupied, evidently wishing to place their intercourse on a new footing. She learned that he loved some one —not herself. He and his sister spent nearly all their time together in private consultation. Only one thing

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was possible to a girl who respected herself, and Mademoiselle Delaunay returned to St. Louis. It was a relief to go: she hoped to escape from herself in escaping from the neighbourhood of M. de Silly. The pain of this parting was less keen than the other, for, as she says, "it is always easier for the one who goes than for the one who stays behind."

But, to escape from herself was impossible; to escape from M. de Silly almost as much so. He liked her too well, as a friend, either to forget or choose to be forgotten. The start of joy which a commonplace billet from him gave her, seemed mournfully out of proportion with its contents; but it recalled her promises to revisit Silly, and implied that he had sought for news of her since she had left the château. He wrote from time to time; it was "kindness counterfeiting absent love;" but she lived on these notes. She made no confidences to any one, not even to the kind Abbess, and allowed her feelings no outlet but scribbling romances with heroes all like M. de Silly. They were torn up as soon as written. Time passed she hardly knew how—as it does pass in severe pain, whether mental or bodily. Summer came again and brought unexpected changes. The old Marquis de Silly died; there were domestic difficulties and perplexities at the château; no invitation came this year from Mademoiselle Delaunay. Dignity bade her remain at St. Louis, but the longing to hear or see something of Silly was too strong, and she accepted an invitation from a friend who lived a

few leagues from the château. She was no ideal heroine, and the candour, which was so marked a trait in her character, makes her own her weakness with startling honesty. She persuaded her friends to propose a visit to Silly. The new master wrote back, that at any other time he should have been charmed to receive them, but just then he was overwhelmed with business. A special invitation was, however, sent to Jeanne by his mother, with an offer to send a carriage to meet her, if she could travel part of the way by the public conveyance. It seems strange that a girl should have been so independent of chaperonage as Mademoiselle Delaunay evidently was. Her friends had no scruple, as to letting her go, and she was full of impatience until the day arrived. There was no time for another letter from Silly to arrive. Like a child expecting some pleasure, she got up very early and went to await the coach at the end of the avenue long before it could arrive. Her friends bade her a kind good-bye, and she set off, full of bright hope and joy, until a chance word from a fellow-passenger told her that M. de Silly had been seen that very day on his way to Versailles. If she had been too eager to see him again, she was sufficiently punished. He was gone! All was contained in those three words—gone! and with sharp pain mingled oddly recollections of the one carriage at Silly, which probably had gone too. So it proved: no carriage, no servant met her. Her friends had sent one with her, but he took very little

trouble about her. She could not be left alone in the high road, and sat in a state of bewildered despair until the coach stopped for the night at a wretched tavern. Her guarded convent life had ill prepared her to act in such an emergency, and when she heard that Silly could now only be reached by her on horseback, she was as much frightened as if told to mount a camel. There was no choice but to sleep at the tavern, in a miserable little room, only divided by a thin partition from one crowded with soldiers and carters. Dread of what sort of talk she should hear through it was not the least of her troubles, and she could hardly trust her ears when she found they did no worse than discuss whether the earth could be round, and if such mysteries really existed as the Antipodes. She rose at dawn, was lifted up like a bundle on a stout horse, led by the lacquey; a guide went with them, and succeeded in losing the way. They had got into a tract of heavy ploughed land, where a stream rendered it impossible for the horse to pass. He was left behind with the miscalled guide; Jeanne and the servant crossed by a plank. Through deep mud, in pouring rain, across pathless fields, and splashed from head to foot, Mademoiselle Delaunay reached Silly at last, too thankful that the master was not there to see her arrive in such a state.

Some lame excuses were made by the ladies of the château for what was inexcusable; Jeanne felt the great mistake which she had made in coming, and

returned as soon as she could to St. Louis. M. de Rey, whose existence she had hardly realized in these troubled months, died about this time, and she felt it as a fresh grief, and life was drifting her away from Mademoiselle de Silly.

A far heavier misfortune was at hand. After a short illness, Madame de Grieu died, and her adopted daughter was left homeless and penniless. It was a dreary prospect; but her brave and independent spirit rose to meet it. An anonymous friend offered to pay for her board at St. Louis; but she steadily refused, though it was sweet to discover that the generous offer had been made by M. de Silly. Other friends sent her money; she only kept as much as would pay for her journey to Paris, where she hoped to find a situation as governess. She had the same love of instructing and governing the young as had two other famous women—in all other respects unlike her and unlike each other—Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Genlis; but her talent found no outlet like theirs. On her way, she spent a few days with friends who had been educated at St. Louis, and though most kindly treated, she began to feel her altered position. One day she had a violent headache. If it had befallen her at St. Louis, every one, from the Abbess to the lay-sisters, would have been occupied by it. Now she only received a message or two, to ask if she wished for anything. She was far too reasonable not to see that this was all she ought to expect; but it was

with a shock of surprise that she perceived how unimportant she had become.

No situation offered itself, and after going to every house where she heard that a governess was wanted, she began to despair of maintaining herself. She was living at an hotel, and her resources ran short. Just at this time she received a letter from M. de Silly, which shows so plainly the brotherly interest he took in her, that it ought to be given at length :—

"They tell me that you are in Paris, Mademoiselle. The interest which I take in whatever concerns you, makes me hear with pleasure the plans which you have decided on. Perhaps you will be surprised at finding my letter full of advice; I am not much in the habit of giving it, still less of writing it; but you are one of my friends, and it seems to me that I am bound so to address you. I think that with your plans, the less time you spend in an hotel the better. I should not like you to make your first acquaintance in such a place. I shall seem very strict; but if I were you, I would avoid dress. Your youth might be against you, and your interest is to conceal it. For the same reason, I should wish you to be rather particular as to the choice of your friends, male and female. I want you, moreover, to wish to be famed rather for sense than wit. Pray use the simplest words you can, and, above all, avoid scientific ones. Although clearer than any others, do not yield to the temptation of using them. Lastly, I want you

to think of gaining a good name rather then of fascinating. But I am afraid that my last maxim is contrary to nature. I daresay that a wish to please is inborn in woman. . . . . Enough, perhaps too much. Adieu, Mademoiselle. Pray be assured that you may count entirely on me."

Mademoiselle Delaunay was both touched and displeased. She thought that he might have known she cared to please no one but himself. Her petulant answer drew forth another letter from him, amused and brotherly, giving more pain than pleasure.

All this time Madame Delaunay was living very poor, very devout, and unable to do anything for the daughter whom she had never seen since Jeanne was three years old. Jeanne had an elder sister, an attendant on the Duchesse de la Ferté, who had once visited her at St. Louis, and shown visible annoyance at the difference of her own position and that of the convent pet. Now the elder sister could patronize the younger, and came to see her. Jeanne's money was all spent; she had been so ill, that she hoped to slip through her troubles by dying; but death only comes apropos in romances, and she heard thankfully that the Duchesse was inclined to help her. Madame de la Ferté was always ready for a new pet; she had charged the elder sister to bring Jeanne back with her. Some one lent her a dress, which she promised to return in a couple of hours, and they hurried away, and found the great lady just awake. She questioned Jeanne, and commented

on her to her face, as people sometimes do with little children, apparently supposing that they do not understand what is said. "Upon my word, she talks very well—very well indeed!" said the Duchesse, wonderingly. "She has just come in time to write a letter for me to M. Desmarets. . . . Stay, Mademoiselle, you shall have some paper directly: all you have got to do is to write."

"Write what, Madame?"

"Just what you like, only he positively must give me what I want."

"But, Madame, I must know what I am to tell him."

"No, no; you quite understand."

It was vain to declare that she understood nothing whatever about the matter, but she gathered a general notion of what had to be written. The hardest part was to discover what titles to use, and by what formula a man of rank was to be addressed, for she saw at once that a mistake in such a thing as a title would seem far more unpardonable to the Duchesse than want of sense. Very doubtful as to the result, she brought her composition to Madame de la Ferté, whose face beamed with satisfaction. "Exactly what I wanted to say," she cried. "It is wonderful how well she has understood my thoughts. Henriette, your sister is astonishing! Oh, as she writes so well, she shall compose a letter to my man of business, while I dress."

This was worse than before. The torrent of explanation which she poured out, left her improvised secretary completely bewildered, and the names of her lawyer and man of business were so intermingled, that it was impossible to tell which was which. The letter was written, and she again expressed her satisfaction, only adding, that she could not understand how so intelligent a person could have mistaken one for the other. It evidently lessened her admiration; but she was still willing to patronize Jeanne. Her toilette finished, she prepared to go to Versailles with her attendant. They had got into the carriage, and Jeanne began to breathe freely, when the Duchesse put her head out and exclaimed, "I think I had better take her too. Get in, get in, Mademoiselle; I want to show you to Madame de Ventadour."

Poor Jeanne—with her dress which must be returned in two hours—stood still in dismay; but the Duchesse, used to implicit obedience, saw nothing of her reluctance, and chattered all the way to Versailles. In spite of Jeanne's annoyance and the folly of Madame de la Ferté, the brilliancy of her conversation struck Jeanne, and made her listen unweariedly to the trifles so happily said. She had not yet lived in the society where to talk well seemed as natural as to breathe. Her attentive silence gave the Duchesse the highest opinion of her. "Of course," she said at last, "since you know so many things, you can draw a horoscope?

It is the only thing in the world which interests me.... What! not know how? What is the good, then, of having learned so many things which are of no use at all?" And she launched into magic, dreams, and omens, until they reached Versailles. Her rooms in the palace were so high up, that Mademoiselle Delaunay was too weary to reach them, and had to be carried up the last flight of stairs. Her heart failed her when she found herself taken possession of, as if she had no mind or will of her own, by this strange and capricious woman, who wanted to exhibit her, like a performing poodle, to her friends. She was worn out, and there was her sister at her elbow, expatiating on her good fortune. They thought that they should be summoned when wanted; but no summons came, until Madame de la Ferté herself entered in a fury at their supposed negligence. The tempest of abuse chiefly fell on Jeanne, who received it as her first lesson in the manners of the great towards their dependants.

The Duchesse's anger was short-lived as fierce. She made up for it by ordering the weary Jeanne to be taken to see all the beauties of Versailles; showed her like a rare animal to every one whom they met, and finally led her to the Duchesse de Noailles, saying, "Here, Madame, is the person of whom I have told you so much, who is so clever, and knows so many things. Come, Mademoiselle, converse. Madame, you will see how well she talks." Perceiving that Jeanne

seemed to find some difficulty in beginning her performance, she added, "Talk a little of religion, and then you can speak on some other subject."

This scene was repeated in half a dozen other houses during the four or five days which Mademoiselle Delaunay was obliged to spend with the Duchesse, who ended by declaring that, since no one appreciated the prodigy which she had discovered, Jeanne should belong to her own household. "I am great enough to make her fortune without any one's help," said she, while her *protégée* stood speechless with consternation. She hoped at least to return for a time to her lodging; but no, she must first be exhibited at Sceaux, where the great, the infallible M. de Malesieux should pass judgment on her capabilities. Just before they set out, her old acquaintance, the Abbé de Vertot, who chanced to be a relation and friend of the Duchesse's, came in. Unaware that Mademoiselle Delaunay had known him in other circumstances, the Duchesse ordered an armchair to be placed for him, leaving Jeanne to stand humbly behind her chair. She usually did so when visitors came, but this time it brought the change home to Jeanne, who slipped away, hiding bitter tears.

Sceaux was a lesser Versailles. In 1670, it had been the property of Colbert, for whom Le Notre planned its gardens, and Lebrun painted the frescoes of its chapel, while the statues of Puget and Girardon ornamented the stately gardens. In Madame du Maine's hands it had become the headquarters of a

kind of spurious literature and romance. Novelty was a sure passport to her favour; but she had heard too much of Madame de la Ferté's discoveries in the way of prodigies, to be eager about Jeanne, and the more she was talked to about anything that did not concern her own interests, the less she listened. Madame de la Ferté turned to M. de Malesieux, chosen oracle of the little court, where he was firmly believed to be the wittiest and greatest man of the day. Supreme as Pythagoras among his disciples, all discussions ended when his decision was given. Willing to gratify Madame de la Ferté, he pronounced Jeanne to be "une personne rare." Sceaux was, as usual, occupied with literature, acting, and entertainments of all kinds; a little restless world, brimful of ambition and intrigue, vanity and vexation of spirit, like the great one. The gentle and timid Duc du Maine scarcely figured in it, and could not be spurred into interfering with politics by his wife's occasional outbursts of irritation, when she would tell him that he could translate verses delightfully from Latin into French, and the result would some day be that the Duc d'Orléans would be Regent of France, and the Duc du Maine a member of the Academy. Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon was of the great and turbulent house of Condé, and had many of the bad and few of the noble qualities of her famous ancestor; her husband was, after all, but the legitimized son of Madame de Montespan, and the training of Madame de Maintenon had made and kept

him a gentle, well-behaved, timid boy, who never grew into a man. From the first, his imperious little wife had ruled him despotically, and Sceaux was her court, not his.

Jeanne grew wearied and dizzy in this strange new world, and pined to escape to her refuge at Paris. Madame de la Ferté allowed it at last, promising very soon to find a situation for her. She would fain have secured Mademoiselle Delaunay for herself, but feared the jealousy of a certain Louison, nominally her servant, and really her mistress, and despotic as only an old servant can be. The Duchesse never could summon courage to announce the plan to Louison, and Jeanne was thankful for it. Time passed by; she made some agreeable friends, among them Fontenelle, but she was reduced to living on borrowed money. M. de Malesieux took some interest in her, and wished to have her at Sceaux, where he thought she might be useful to his wife. Madame du Maine consented to add her to her establishment, much as if it had been proposed to her to have another dog or cat; and a vague proposal was made to Jeanne to accept a situation about the Duchesse. In her distress and perplexity she closed with the offer. Madame de la Ferté had allowed her to spend her last farthing while waiting with weary patience for the situation which never was found, but could not pardon her for acting for herself. The great lady did not disdain to revenge herself on the helpless dependant, and took her like a captive to Sceaux, presenting her with scornful

ceremony to Madame du Maine, who hardly looked at her, and to as many other people as she could. This done, she said, with chilling hauteur, worse than her usual outbreaks of temper, that she renounced her, and wished neither to see nor hear of her any more, and left Jeanne to discover that she was to be nothing more than one of Madame du Maine's *femmes de chambre.* She found a room allotted to her which had no chimney, so little light that she was forced to grope her way about it, so low that she could not stand upright in it, and this den she was obliged to share by day with an attendant who spent the night in the Duchesse's room. Such lodgings were not, however, more uncomfortable than those generally assigned to attendants; perhaps there was not a great lady in France, except Madame, the King's sister-in-law, who ever scrupled to lodge them as a stable-boy would now refuse to be lodged.

The habitual sleeplessness of Madame du Maine kept her women waking also; her room was full of courtiers until morning, all seeking to amuse her; or she would order some one to read aloud. Her attendants made up for their vigils by sleeping by day, and Jeanne, finding that her companion either wanted to rest or else talk with her husband, wandered about the galleries, or sat out of doors, to get out of their way, blundering over the plain work allotted her. Her superior birth and education were now absolute disadvantages to her, making her companions suspicious and jealous, while they scorned her incapacity for her new labour. She

was the most awkward of ladies' maids, her short sight and nervousness made her hopelessly clumsy; she would spill the water which she should have handed to her mistress, drop her jewels and upset her rouge, while the other attendants, skilful and practised, looked on with contemptuous smiles, and wondered why their lady kept so useless a creature. Her sister heard of her unpopularity, and reproved her. Jeanne had grown too wretched to defend herself, and asked what she ought to do. "Pay visits to the *femmes de chambre* who come here to stay, and show them politeness," advised Henriette, and Jeanne meekly followed her to the room where were assembled the persons whose favour she was to gain. Some were playing at cards, some looking on. Jeanne thought them as much alike as a flock of sheep, but she sat down by the nearest who was unoccupied, and did her best to make herself agreeable. It used to be the easiest thing in the world in other days, but now she had a more critical audience than at Château Silly or St. Louis. The woman whom she had picked out chanced to be one looked down on by the rest, and Jeanne's politeness to her furnished a new subject for mockery.

Poor Jeanne! She was nearly twenty-seven years of age, too old readily to adapt herself to a new life, especially one so uncongenial. She, too, had held a little court once, when all St. Louis was at her feet, and the change was as great as if she had been a discrowned queen. Her position isolated her from her equals in

birth and education, and since she had been a *femme de chambre*, even M. de Malesieux, who knew something of her worth, treated her with cool indifference.

Just when heart and hope were alike failing, came a kind letter from M. de Silly. She was not quite forgotten, then; her spirits rose, and she felt that if she could but find an opportunity of conversing with some of these courtiers, who esteemed even a moderate amount of wit so highly, she might take a better position. But the opportunity was hard to find. Madame du Maine would have caught at anything which amused her, but she never spoke to her timid, awkward attendant, who could not venture to address her. No one seemed aware of her existence; there was no one to whom she could give pleasure. If any one noticed her, it was to humiliate her. On one occasion, while undressing the Duchesse, she picked up and restored a few louis d'or which had fallen from the pocket of her dress. Dressing and undressing were public ceremonies; a gentleman present looked at Jeanne and observed, "Your Highness has very honest servants," and Jeanne's face burned with shame and indignation. The news of her old friend M. Brunel's death reached her amid her troubles. She felt alone in the world.

M. Brunel had been very kind in lending her money in her need without security. She had saved enough to repay the debt, and sent the amount to his heirs through M. de Fontenelle.

Night and day she thought how to escape from this

intolerable situation, but in vain. Strange offers were made to her, showing in what light respect she was held. An offer of a handsome annuity was made her through a lady if she would forward a mysterious love-affair. She refused them all. In a court so full of intrigue as Sceaux she could not keep clear of it, and was deeply annoyed by finding herself unawares mixed up in an affair the scandal of which she knew nothing about. Severe blame fell on her, and one of her companions said insolently, "It is a very unpleasant business for us all; people talk about a woman of Madame du Maine's, and we get all confounded together." She passed some years in this miserable state; M. de Silly ceased to write; the past seemed dead and gone, the future could bring her nothing, and yet after all this lapse of time, happening to hear his name unexpectedly, she turned faint and dizzy with emotion.

Meanwhile, the little world on the edge of which she stood went on its way, guided by its stars, M. de Malesieux and the Abbé de Genest. The former had been tutor to the Duc du Maine, and knew a little of a vast number of things, Greek and Latin, mathematics and literature, making verses, translating classic authors, and devising theatrical performances. The latter was a man whose very name provoked a smile. He, too, knew a little of most things, was half poet, half buffoon; a Proteus, blessed with a prodigious nose, *long de plus de deux aunes*, and an absence of mind which had even betrayed Louis Quatorze himself into irrepressible

laughter. Something of a parasite, something of a Scapin, always gay, always ready to laugh and be laughed at, the Abbé de Genest was indispensable at Sceaux. But M. de Malesieux, "the great Malesieux," was yet more so. It was the entertainments which he gave the Duchesse du Maine, when she visited his house in 1699, that suggested to her the mock Arcadia that she created afterwards at Sceaux. Gallant surprises met her at every step, innocent little sports sprang up at every moment; they played at being nymphs, or shepherdesses, and even played at economy by way of preface to future prodigality. Sceaux must next be a miniature Marly, a little Arcadia, whence the cold light of reality must be carefully excluded. There, adored, flattered, with no one to thwart her caprices, reigned the Lilliputian Duchesse, reading Latin with the help of M. de Malesieux, dabbling in astronomy, toying with the newly invented microscope, acting comedies, not the less applauded for acting them very badly, dancing, singing—conspiring sometimes—night and day. The "Empérière of Sceaux," as the President de Mesmes called her, could not need such an earthly thing as sleep; it was therefore unnecessary to her courtiers. There is an old book called "The Diversions of Sceaux," which describes how days and nights were spent there—with what extravagant fantasies, what weary amusements. Sometimes there were lotteries; sometimes the gardens were illuminated; Dryads peeped from the shrubberies, enchanters threatened with their

spells, Cyclops glared from among the trees, or giant ninepins, containing mountebanks, played a game on the terraces, until chased away by a motley company dressed as kings of clubs, knaves of spades, or queens of hearts, or a chorus of voices sang to bid "detestable sleep begone."* When the Duchesse had what she called one of her "great nights," a king and queen were selected to preside despotically over the amusements; and at their bidding the capable and incapable alike must sing or dance, improvise and act. Sometimes a bag, containing letters of the alphabet, was handed round; everyone drew a letter, by which his fate was determined. C must provide a comedy, F relate a fable, and unfortunate O was bound to compose an opera. It is easy to imagine with what scorn St. Simon looked on at such scenes as these; he describes them in his scathing words: "Madame du Maine swam," he writes, "in the joy of her new greatness; . . . . and the Duke, who always trembled before her, and dreaded lest any contradiction should turn her head altogether, gave in, even piteously doing the honours."

Life at Sceaux resembled the restless dance of a number of flies.

Had she but guessed that her awkward *femme de chambre* could have ministered to her restless craving for amusement, Mademoiselle Delaunay's position would have changed at once. It did change, at last, in a sudden and unexpected manner. Certain disagreeable jests

* "Quittez nos champs délicieux, détestable sommeil!"

were current respecting M. de Fontenelle, the nephew of Corneille, and Secretary of the Academy. It was not easy to move Fontenelle; Madame Geoffrin said of him that he was a man who in all his life had never been in a passion, never shed a tear, never ran, never interrupted anyone. Once, however, his impassive calmness gave way; he could not restrain his tears at the death of Jeanne's friend, M. Brunel; and perhaps the raillery which we have spoken of annoyed him, for he answered some of his friends with, "Here is better wit than yours," and produced a letter written by Mademoiselle Delaunay. Wit was a power in those days. Everyone wanted to copy the letter, and the astonished Duchesse du Maine was assailed by congratulations on her good fortune in possessing such a treasure as Jeanne. She sent for her to know if she had really written anything clever, and demanded the letter. Naturally enough, Jeanne had no copy, but everyone else produced one. She had a triumph; her renown spread far beyond Sceaux, and M. de Silly heard of it, and wrote, begging her to renew her correspondence with him. "My success revived his recollections of me," was her bitter comment; and yet she was glad, and wrote regularly, receiving brief answers, such as, "I have had yours of such a date. Continue to tell me whatever happens. You did not mention such a thing. . . . ." Dry enough, yet it made her happy. It was his writing, his seal. To most people it would be as difficult to understand what these letters were to her, as to the

postman, who once positively refused to give up her expected billet because he had no change, and she could not pay her exact postage. Vainly she exclaimed that he might keep the surplus. He turned to go, saying obstinately, "I will come again by and by." Jeanne's passionate remonstrance awoke her fellow maid, who murmured sleepily, "As if it were not just the same when one gets a letter!" but paid the sous required on condition that she should be aroused by no more talking.

The position of Mademoiselle Delaunay altered considerably when Sceaux ascertained that she was amusing. Madame du Maine now often talked to her, and would even confide her ambitious little projects for the aggrandisement of her family to Jeanne, who was so glad to be trusted and treated on a friendly footing, that she began to be attached to her capricious and cold-hearted mistress, though seeing clearly that people were only dear to Madame du Maine as long as they were useful to her, and that she was in no way to be relied on. Her talents and her clever talk were, however, delightful to Jeanne, weary as she was of lady's-maid's gossip. Instead of blundering over dress-making, or handing rouge, Jeanne now devised *fêtes* to amuse Madame du Maine during her sleepless nights. Good Taste would appear before her (a rare guest at Sceaux, by the way) leading the Graces; Gambling brought in his tables, aided by songs and dances; while Laughter set up a theatre on which a little comedy was acted, in which Madame du Maine herself took a part, acting very

badly, and applauded by everyone. Jeanne was urged to fill a *rôle*, but her nerves always failed her in public, and it was evident that her talent consisted rather in making others shine than in shining herself. The courtiers readily forgave her. So retiring and useful a person could not but gain favour; but it was not in this frivolous little world that she found her real friends. She had much sense of humour, and must have been amused when Madame de la Ferté, who had ignored her during all the years that she had pined unnoticed, appropriated her success, reminded everyone that she had brought Jeanne to Sceaux, paraded her discernment, and restored her to a measure of favour. She pitied Jeanne for being at Sceaux rather than with her, and once said, "Do you know, I never met with anyone but myself who is always in the right." Jeanne always found infinite amusement in observing the characters of those around her; and Madame de la Ferté was one of her favourite studies. No rude shocks of reality had ever shaken the fairy world of the Duchesse du Maine. The spoiled child could not imagine that anything she wished for was beyond her reach, and if ever she wished for anything persistently, it was to aggrandize herself. The failing health of Louis Quatorze, and the sudden deaths of several of the royal family, fanned her ambition into flame. No one acknowledged the King to be sinking, but everyone knew it, and a multitude of hopes and fears filled the court, unspoken, but none the less influential and active.

Madame de Maintenon had always felt great affection for her pupil, the Duc du Maine. She was now persuaded out of her usual prudence, and induced the King to tell him the contents of his will. It was so favourable to the legitimized sons, that they foresaw the deadly jealousy which it would awake in the Duke of Orleans, whom they had repulsed when he would willingly have been their ally, and they implored the King to reconsider it. He refused to make any change, and died, forgetting that his authority would depart with him. The Duke of Orleans became Regent; the Duc du Maine preserved only a shadow of the great power destined him, and the Duchesse buzzed into the Tuileries like an angry little wasp, ready to sting at the first opportunity. Mademoiselle Delaunay's nights now became as sleepless as those of her mistress, who required her to read aloud through the long hours, or listen to the requests, and plots, and plans in which the Duc du Maine took little or no share.

In Paris Jeanne found congenial friends whenever she had leisure for them, and a singular variety was introduced into her life by the extreme admiration of the old blind Abbé de Chaulieu, who had almost reached the respectable age of eighty years, but was still as gay and ardent as in youth. He delighted in Jeanne's conversation, which he could hear, and lent her face, which he could not see, all the beauty which it did not possess. Some of the innumerable letters to her which he dictated to his secretary have been preserved, and give a strange

picture of a time when an aged ecclesiastic could send absolute love-letters to a young woman without fear of smiles or scandal, though for scandal he had given abundant cause in his dissipated youth. He would have heaped presents on her, as well as verses comparing her to Helen of Troy, but here her right-minded independence once more stepped in. She would decline laughingly, and say that he had better not be too ready with his generous offers, lest some lady should accept them; to which he naïvely replied that he knew he was safe with her. Sometimes he would suspect her of being too poorly dressed, and reproach her. "Abbé," she would answer, more seriously, "my economy is my best ornament." Her salary was not large, and she was trying to lay up a store for winter days. Then again her ancient admirer would accuse her of vanity and coquetry; and she would gaily retort that a little coquetry was all that she had to enliven her, but it should be renounced whenever she had a more cheerful room, with a window and fire-place. She was lodged as gloomily and inconveniently at the Tuileries as at Sceaux, but otherwise she was much better off. The hope, and the fear, and the longing, which had filled her girlhood only to subside into "the long dull anguish of patience," startled her by its sudden awakening when she unexpectedly met a servant of M. de Silly's, who told her that his master had been for some time returned from Germany. Jeanne had had neither letter nor message. Womanly pride was aroused at last, in spite

of the invincible affection which struggled with it; she could not suffer herself to be like a glove drawn on and off at pleasure. Her busy life at Paris occupied her mind, and the respect and strong liking of such men as Fontenelle made her resent the carelessness of M. de Silly. Yet, though she told herself that thenceforward she could meet him without the mingled joy and pain which once was aroused by the mere sound of his name, and even was willing to make a marriage for the sake of a home, the sensitive ear of her blind Abbé detected her secret by some change or tone in her voice the first time that he met M. de Silly in her presence. The Abbé de Chaulieu's attachment was Platonic enough to allow him to arrange many parties in which they might meet, and M. de Silly sometimes went to see her at the Tuileries, but his friendship for the Regent placed him in opposition with the Duchesse du Maine's party. Jeanne told herself that now she met him only as a friend, and could care for things that did not regard him, such as a fine day, a pleasant party; she felt as if free from a long slavery to one absorbing feeling, and yet it was sad to be free. There was not much to live for, and she was still young, and not likely to die.

There had been a great lawsuit between the Regent and the house of Condé; a deadly feud ensued, and a fierce attack on the privileges of the legitimized princes which set all Paris ablaze. Lawyers filled the apartment of the Duc du Maine day and night, and the Duchesse threw herself into the contest with the violence

of an angry woman opposed for the first time in her life. Her bed was heaped with chronicles, histories, and law books, which she consulted for the memorial which her husband was to lay before Parliament; folios and quartos walled her in; Jeanne had to look out facts and precedents, and communicate them to M. de Malesieux and the Cardinal de Polignac, who were to draw up the memorial, until her mistress was wearied enough to bid her cease, and read something amusing until she fell asleep. Then, and not till then, might Jeanne seek her bed, usually too tired to rest. Every one who wanted money or favour hastened with offers of assistance in this great historical work. Jeanne was deputed to see most of them, and was much amused by these interviews. Sometimes a gaunt savant would come, learned in the customs of the Chaldeans or Egyptians, and persuaded her that important precedents might be found in their history for the claims of the legitimized princes. Such a one was M. Boivin, who, as Mademoiselle Delaunay remarks, knew nothing of any court but that of Semiramis, and supposed that examples from the family history of Nimrod would be conclusive as to the rights of the sons of Louis Quatorze. Although at her toilette when he came, Madame du Maine admitted him. He, supposing that he should only see one of her women, remained lost in learned abstraction, expounded his views without noticing the splendid room, the elaborate toilette, or the crowd of attendants, and went away as he had come, in a dream. Time, money, intrigues

were lavished in vain. The princes lost their cause; the succession to the throne was barred against them, and their privileges were greatly shorn. The Duc du Maine would have submitted, but his wife was all flame and fury. She plotted against the Regent, sought aid from Spain, and did her best to perform her threat of setting the kingdom alight from end to end. M. de Malesieux's help was called for in forging intrigues and writing treasonable letters, just as at Sceaux he had been bidden to compose a madrigal or arrange a comedy, and the Cardinal de Polignac was persuaded or forced to assist also. They composed a letter which was to be sent to the King of Spain, and lost it. The Cardinal had hurried away to the Royal Mass, charging M. de Malesieux to burn the rough copy as soon as he had made a fair one. When the fair copy was made, the original seemed mysteriously to have disappeared. Greatly alarmed, after a vain search, M. de Malesieux thought it safest to say nothing, but let every one suppose the rough copy to be burned and the other safe in Spain.

Mademoiselle Delaunay was admitted into more or less of this plotting, and her good sense told her that it must end by lodging all concerned in it within the Bastille. Madame du Maine laughed scornfully at her prediction, and said that she feared nothing but the anxiety of her timid husband to keep out of the affair. The alternations of hope and fear in which she now lived were delightful to her. Not so to Jeanne, who

was worn out by want of sleep and the hard mental work required of her. She made a great effort to free herself, after a violent burst of the Condé temper from the Duchesse, who suddenly took it into her head to treat Jeanne again as merely a clumsy servant, but Madame du Maine could not afford to lose her, and even made an apology through the Cardinal de Polignac. A chance of a better situation fell through, and Jeanne, homeless and poor, resigned herself again to her life, only rather more sad and weary than she had been before.

The Regent wished for nothing better than the plots, which he was well aware of. Here was the very pretext which he wanted for destroying enemies who were troublesome, if not formidable. Madame du Maine learned with astonishment and terror that she was suspected. Her sport was turning to formidable reality, and she could not stop the wheels which she had set in motion. Nothing happened for a few days, and she was entirely reassured. Suddenly the Regent caused the young King to hold a *lit de justice*, taking away all the privileges of the legitimized princes, but restoring them to the Comte de Toulouse, "as his conduct had been satisfactory." This measure alarmed the Duc and Duchesse beyond measure; they fled from the Tuileries without an effort of resistance, though the Parliament hesitated to confirm so insolent a defiance to the will of Louis Quatorze. Jeanne was sent off in haste to Sceaux, to burn all papers which might inculpate her

mistress. She hurried there in great terror, not knowing how far Madame du Maine had endangered herself or others, looked through the papers, and destroyed all which seemed dangerous. Shortly after, the Regent sent for them, and when none of any importance could be found, it was remembered against Jeanne that she was the trusted attendant of the Duchesse. The next day the Duc and Duchesse came to Sceaux; he angry, as a timid man always is when dragged into discomfort and peril; she even more alarmed, as she realized, in the consternation of her courtiers and the coldness of former friends, how serious was her danger. Its vagueness added to the insecurity. What was discovered? Who had confessed? What would happen next? For three days and nights she kept Jeanne beside her, now seeming stupefied with fear, and then starting into feverish activity. M. de Malesieux was more restless than any one, recollecting his lost despatch. He asked Jeanne mysteriously if she had seen any paper lying about, full of corrections; but she could give no information. Inaction was abhorrent to the Duchesse. She sent Jeanne on a secret mission to Paris, to learn from a trusty friend whether there was any hopes of the Pretender's recovering the throne of England, and thus depriving the Regent of his best ally. A plan was formed of sending despatches to Spain in a chair with a false bottom. One of the people mixed up in this affair was the Abbé Brigault. The secret leaked out, and the Regent had the papers

seized, together with some belonging to the Spanish ambassador. News reached Sceaux accidentally of what had occurred. A gentleman came into Jeanne's room, exclaiming, "Great news! the hotel of the Spanish ambassador is surrounded by troops, but no one knows why." Jeanne knew only too well, but there were people present unaware of how important the news was to her, among them the old blind Abbé, with his quick ear, and she had to preserve her calmness as best she could. Every new comer had something to tell or add. Madame du Maine was terrified beyond measure; her husband remained passive, as if the matter did not concern him. Two days after, while she was playing at *biribi*—for cards, and comedies, and literary discussions went on exactly as usual—as M. de Châtillon broke his usual silence by the sudden remark, "By-the-by, there is droll news. That business of the Spanish ambassador's has got a certain Abbé into the Bastille . . . . the Abbé . . . Abbé . . . Bri—Bri——" he could not recal the name. Those who knew it had not the least desire to help him, but at last he recollected it, and added, "The droll thing is, that he has told everything, and an awkward matter it must be for a great many." And he burst out laughing, for the first time in his life. Madame du Maine had been experiencing for two whole days the novel necessity of controlling herself. She answered with tolerable composure, "Very amusing." "Enough to kill one with laughing," continued M. de Châtillon, with the persistency of a dull man over what he thinks a good

joke. "Imagine all the people who fully believed their little matters to be a dead secret, and here comes a man telling even more than he is asked, and naming everybody concerned!"

It was evident that M. de Châtillon did not know who had been named; he was totally unaware of the Duchesse's near interest in the matter. News of fresh arrests came, and Madame du Maine lived in a day-dream of being an oppressed heroine, imprisoned, with all her suite, in some palace, where Jeanne should be her confidante. The delight of a new position was so great that she almost grew impatient for imprisonment. Jeanne, less imaginative, saw no charm in the prospect, and lived in continual alarms. One night she was roused from the deep sleep of weariness by feeling her arms grasped. Half asleep still, she could hardly understand that a friend sought to warn the Duchesse that the arrest would take place that night. Madame du Maine ordered in all her attendants, and sat in bed, excited and delighted by the sense of danger. With courtly readiness every one followed her lead, and the night was spent in jesting and gaiety. Five or six evenings later Jeanne was aroused again, and asked, half dreaming, "Who is there?" "In the King's name!" was the answer; and then came a rough order to get up. It was a dark December night; she could not see who was in her room. A light was brought, and revealed an officer and two musketeers. The officer read aloud an order not to lose sight of her, and she had to rise and

dress before them. The whole house was full of soldiers. Jeanne's maid tried to reach her room, but was sharply ordered back, and Jeanne could learn nothing of what was passing until late in the day, when a guardsman came in to say that the Duchesse had been taken away, and Mademoiselle Delaunay might be left with one musketeer.

She learned afterwards that instead of the splendid circumstances in which Madame du Maine had in fancy clothed her arrest, she had been carried off in a hired coach, with only two women, to Dijon; the Duc was sent, strictly guarded, to a citadel in Picardy; and M. de Malesieux was in the Bastille. When his papers were seized, the lost letter, sought so often in vain, fell out of a contract, into which it had slipped unnoticed. He rushed forward, and tore it up, but the pieces were seized and put together, and it proved a terrible *pièce de conviction.*

General and sweeping misfortune fell on all connected with the Duc and Duchesse, great and small. Some were exiled, some sent to convents, others banished, and many, both nobles and servants, sent to the Bastille. Among these was Jeanne. Her guard advised her to eat a good meal before she went, much as if she were never likely to have another; her papers, her books, and bed were narrowly examined, and leave to take her maid was harshly refused her. At seven o'clock at night she was sent, under the guard of three soldiers, to Paris. She alighted from the carriage at a little bridge,

"So she was within the Bastille!" P. 131

where the Governor came to meet her. There was a little delay, because some one else implicated in the plot had just been brought in, whom Jeanne was not to see. She crossed several drawbridges, thinking that the clanking chains had a remarkably disagreeable sound, and was led to a large, dirty room, totally unfurnished; a straw-bottomed chair was fetched, two stones were brought in, on which a lighted log was laid; a short candle-end was stuck up against the wall, and then the Governor silently retired, securing five or six locks behind him.

So she was within the Bastille! The name no longer awoke the old horror, but it was still very terrible, still full of mystery. No one without its walls could guess how many prisoners it contained, who yet lived, and who had escaped by death. Bastille had once meant, like Kremlin, only a fortified place, but people had long spoken of *the* Bastille as they did of *the* Kremlin, and so mighty and immovable did it look, that "solid as the Bastille" was a popular proverb. The Governor had his house in the second outer court; he was a very great officer, and paid in proportion to his importance. A deep moat, two bridges, and a massive grating separated this court from the next, in the heart of the prison, with six great towers frowning down upon it, and a clock, adorned by two figures chained together by waist and neck, hands and feet, as if Time itself could not escape in the Bastille. Beyond this was another court, smaller, darker, overlooked by two more towers. The

Bastille was a fortress as well as a prison. It ceased to be either in July, 1789.

Jeanne sat looking at her fire, and meditating. Her chief anxiety at that moment was to know whether her maid Rondel would be allowed to follow her. A long hour passed. The keys turned again in the locks, and the Governor reappeared with the faithful maid, who asked, as calmly as if lodging in the Bastille were the most matter-of-course thing in the world, if they were to sleep on the floor. The Governor answered with a rough jest, and went away. Jeanne and her maid fell into eager talk, interrupted by the noisy opening of the door, and an order to go into the next room. The sullen air of their jailor alarmed them; they silently obeyed, and he locked them up and left them. Jeanne began to grow nervous; a strange, harsh sound struck her ear, and suggested uncertain horrors. Rondel suggested that it was caused by some machine for crushing saltpetre in the arsenal, but her mistress thought it too near and too alarming to be satisfied with this explanation. It turned out to be the creaking of a smoke-jack. Neither bed nor supper was brought, and they were thankful to see the door open again, and be ordered back to their old room, now furnished with a little bed, a mattress for Rondel, an arm-chair, and a few more articles of furniture. Rondel was indignant, like a true lady's maid, at her humble pallet. The jailor sulkily said that the King provided the beds, and prisoners must put up with them. Jeanne's spirits rose at once

on seeing the comparative comfort of her room, and in the faithful companionship of Rondel, who had followed her entirely by choice, and out of affection, but she began to wish that she had followed the musketeer's advice, and made a good meal. Supper came at last, and she went to bed and would have slept, had not the little bell, rung by the sentinel on guard to show that he was waking, kept her waking too. It was a long time before she could get used to it.

The Governor of the Bastille was far from discourteous to her. He sent her cards for piquet, and some odd volumes of a romance, but Jeanne had little heart for romance-reading. Torture was still in use, and she could not forget it. She longed to be brought before her judges, and know her fate, but she seemed forgotten in her cell. Rondel and she talked continually over what had happened on the day of her arrest, and when the story was done, they began all over again. They did not know who might have been arrested, and eagerly awaited Sunday, hoping to see their companions in misfortune at mass. It turned out to be an unusual favour if prisoners were allowed to be present, and though Jeanne was allowed to go, she was placed where she could neither see nor be seen. Her windows looked on the inner court, and she was told that they must be papered up. Jeanne represented that her short sight prevented her from recognizing any one who might pass below, and the Governor relented. He forgot that Rondel could see, and she spent almost all her time

looking out and gleaning such scanty news as she could, for her own and her mistress's amusement. They saw two gentlemen constantly pass through the court, and knew that they were examining the prisoners in a room below Jeanne's. When they were there a fire was lighted, which filled her cell with smoke. Its rising vapour was the signal to Rondel and Jeanne to lie down on the floor and listen to the murmur of voices, now vehement, now feeble, below them, though words were undistinguishable. In the complete dearth of interest, even this was something. Jeanne tried to settle what she should say when her turn came, and what would be asked her, but it did not come. She found herself in want of every necessary, with as small a wardrobe as any lady of romance forcibly abducted, and without the jewels which such a heroine would not have failed to carry with her. Rondel washed their clothes as best she could in a jug, and one day, when Jeanne's *cornette* was undergoing this operation, and she had tied a white handkerchief round her head to replace it, the King's lieutenant, M. de Maisonrouge, walked in to pay her a visit. It was really hard to be surprised in *dishabille* by a visitor in the Bastille, where visitors were scarce, and Jeanne, in her sententious way, registered an observation that there is no situation in which a woman is not annoyed at being seen to disadvantage. The Governor had begged M. de Maisonrouge to pay her a visit, to which he replied that he could find nothing to say to weeping

damsels. Assured that Jeanne neither wept nor wailed over her lot, he marched into her room, and announced, with military brusqueness, that she had nothing to fear, for even if Madame du Maine were proved guilty, Jeanne would escape on the plea of having been forced to obey her mistress. Jeanne suspected a snare, and answered that she did not believe anything would be found out to the Duchesse's disadvantage; but that if she had done wrong to please her mistress, she should deserve punishment, for no one could be forced to do amiss. The lieutenant looked surprised and pleased; the reply touched his chivalrous sense of honour. Jeanne little guessed how true and generous a friend she had won in the upright soldier, who, almost in spite of herself, is the real hero of her Memoirs, and of whose devotion she certainly proved herself unworthy.

In the midst of her difficulties as to her wardrobe, the Governor brought her a large bundle of clothes, with a purse full of gold. Much astonished, she examined the purse, and recognized it as one which she had made, and given to a friend long before. This friend, M. de Valincourt, was the only person who had not feared to use influence in her behalf, and though himself suspected and in danger, fearlessly asked permission to send her possessions, and to write weekly and ask what she needed. The sheet of paper was sent open, and had a broad margin, on which, in the presence of the Governor, she wrote Yes or No to each question. No more was permitted, lest a secret correspondence should be carried

on. Every week during her long imprisonment came the kind missive, and M. de Valincourt never failed to think of and send everything that she or her maid could need. If rich in nothing else, Madamoiselle Delaunay was rich in faithful friends, both men and women; and it should be noted that she had both, possessing the rare gift of charming her own sex as much as the other.

She would have been calm and almost happy in her prison, but for her impending examination, and the haunting recollections of stories, told her only a few days before her arrest by the Abbé de Chaulieu, of terrible deeds done in the Bastille. He had spoken of a lady of rank, maimed for life by torture, to which she was condemned without trial. Jeanne knew that she was held to be Madame du Maine's confidante, and she rightly suspected that the Spanish plot had branched far and wide, beyond what the Duchesse knew or intended. If it were necessary to select a victim who might easily be driven to confess, a woman would probably be chosen, rather than a man. Unable to bear the suspense, she tried to learn from the Lieutenant whether torture were still used. She asked him point blank, as they walked up and down her room together. Involuntarily her voice sank, and he made no answer, took another turn, and left her, leaving Jeanne to the agonizing conviction that he knew what awaited her, but could not bear to tell her. She walked hurriedly up and down, reflecting. She did not fear to die, and she

thought that she could bear to suffer, but she dreaded lest pain should wring false confessions from her. Then she told herself that people can bear severe operations in silence, or with only inarticulate moans; she would try to do no worse, and so argued herself into something like composure. But it was a vast relief when she found out that M. du Maisonrouge was deaf of one ear, and had not heard a word of her faltering question.

This comforting discovery had not taken place when she was called before her examiners. She was not in the habit of using rouge, but chancing to find some in her pocket, she put a little on, lest she should look white and frightened. She had been three weeks in prison. The Keeper of the Seals looked sternly at her, bade her sit down and take off her glove. She drew off the left-hand one, but was bidden to uncover the right, and raise it. She obeyed, thinking that she would do whatever they pleased, but say only what she pleased.

The first question was where she had lived; the next whether Madame du Maine had not shown her great confidence, and talked much with her at night. "Yes," Jeanne answered; "usually about the books which they had been reading."

"Madame la Duchesse du Maine," observed one of the examiners, "has too restless a mind to speak long of any one thing."

"True," said Jeanne; "she talked of so many that I cannot remember them all."

She was questioned as to letters which she had written, but nothing weighty was asked, and she fancied that they must be playing with her, as a cat does with a mouse, little guessing that from other sources they had already learnt enough for their purpose. No more questions were put to her, except a courteous inquiry if she were well treated. Madame de Lambert, who had sent to warn Jeanne of the intended arrest of the Duchesse, took an interest in her, and had used her influence on this occasion with the examiners.

The terror that had seized Jeanne now passed away. She felt inexpressibly thankful that she could answer truthfully without compromising anyone. Life had tired her so much ever since she left St. Louis that this quiet existence was almost happiness. If she could not follow all her own wishes in the Bastille, at least she was not obliged to submit to those of anyone else. She found interests, even some little amusement, and wondered at the pleasure which they brought her. The Governor gave her a cat, to deliver her from the mice which overran her room. This cat had kittens, and their playful gambols amused her in many long hours. A game at cards, or needlework, things which she had never cared for before, now entertained her, though she could not tell whether she were growing more or less philosophical; and she was allowed some books. There were different degrees of confinement in the Bastille, and hers was comparatively mild. Yes, she was happy, and she owned it with wonder, thinking that she should

never again much fear what the future might bring, since she had found what she had thought uninhabitable as the Torrid Zone was tempered, when she came to dwell in it, by cooling winds and occasional showers.

Easter came; the Governor asked her if she wished to confess. Prisoners could have no priest but the chaplain of the Bastille, and Jeanne did not like the notion, afraid lest secrecy might not be observed; but the Regent was known to inquire into every detail of the prisoners' conduct, and she felt sure that if she did not confess he would consider it suspicious. She begged the Governor to let her have paper, on which to write her confession, lest she should omit anything; he answered, with a laugh, that she must write nothing which he did not read. Jeanne was very angry. He had refused another entreaty which she had made on her knees, that he would let her old friend, the surviving Madame de Grieu, know what had become of her. The chaplain proved kind and trustworthy, and Jeanne's thoughts turned more earnestly towards Heaven than they had ever done since her vain love for M. de Silly embittered her, and the restless life of Sceaux absorbed her.

Some of the prisoners had been persuaded or betrayed into revelations very serviceable to the Regent, and as a reward they were allowed to walk on the bastion, singly and well guarded. The same favour was soon granted to Jeanne, who had an evening hour for her walk, and M. de Maisonrouge for her escort. She had

charmed the frank soldier as she charmed so many; and it was with regret that he told her that after the 1st of May no more walks were to be allowed. She thought it very cruel, and when explained that at a time of year when every one was out of doors prisoners might be seen and signalled to by the people outside of the Bastille, Jeanne almost laughed at precautions against so unlikely an accident, and pleaded her short sight, but in vain.

Soon, some of those arrested with her were set free, but Mademoiselle Delaunay remained captive. She cared little, especially as she was then permitted to resume her daily walks; and the Lieutenant procured paper and pens for her. She was obliged to number the sheets and give them up if required, which limited her choice of subjects on which to write. Meditations on some passages of the Book of Ecclesiastes occurred to her as profitable and safe. Her life became much pleasanter from this time. M. de Maisonrouge brought her books and better provisions, and devoted himself to cheering her imprisonment. Many men had been her friends, but he alone loved her truly, generously; asking for nothing but to serve her. "Love will not be compelled by mastery," from Chaucer's time downwards, and no savant has ever discovered the laws which guide preference and aversions; but Jeanne falls in our estimation when we find her indifferent to the honest affection of a good man, and wrapped up in a kind of flirtation with a Chevalier De Menil, unworthy of her in every

respect. It began in the vacant want of interest in her prison life. She knew that M. De Menil was in the Bastille, not as a conspirator, but for burning a packet of letters which might have compromised a friend engaged in the Spanish plot. He was very weary of captivity and eager for any change. Poor Maisonrouge betrayed his feelings for Jeanne to everyone, talked about her to all the inmates of the Bastille, and then would say in perfect good faith, "I never go anywhere but I hear her praises! It is surprising how everyone admires her!" M. De Menil asked him to convey some verses of his to Mademoiselle Delaunay. Delighted at having found a new amusement for her, the good Lieutenant begged her to reply. A long, half serious, half playful correspondence ensued, ending by her consenting to an interview. He brought the Chevalier when Jeanne was in bed, the manners of the time making this a natural hour to choose, and from that time they met often—oftener than poor Maisonrouge suspected, for De Menil found means of opening his door, and as the key was often left outside Jeanne's, access was easy. She was vexed, puzzled, pleased. De Menil urged her to marry him when they were released; she thought that in him she had found a kindred spirit, and though she felt nothing like the love which she had had for M. de Silly, she accepted his attentions readily enough. Letters were secretly exchanged; the rising suspicions of M. de Maisonrouge were unscrupulously lulled to rest; Rondel, with a soubrette's

enjoyment of any love affair, watched for moments when the two could meet, and passed notes backwards and forwards. It is a far from pleasant part of Jeanne's life, but her better self appeared when she refused this written engagement offered by De Menil, saying, "What good is it? If you continue to love me, you will keep your promise; if not, should I wish to be your wife?"

She was persuaded that he truly loved her, and would keep his word. Her feelings towards him seem to have been liking, pleasure in his attentions, and desire for a home. He pleased her, and she pleased him, and they were fellow-prisoners. Gradually they grew over bold; lingering too long, he was locked up with her and Rondel by a turnkey, who did not perceive his presence. Jeanne was in despair. Her only resource was to watch for Maisonrouge passing in the court below, and entreat him to come to her. He heard her call, and hurried up to her room. She stammered out a few words, he saw De Menil, and his pleased, kind look changed into stern reproach. With a cold, brief reproof to both, he conducted De Menil to his room, and did not return to Jeanne. She was heartily ashamed and sorry; afraid, too, that she should see her Chevalier no more. Maisonrouge never alluded to what had passed, and was kind and thoughtful as before. Jeanne might be amiable or pettish—and her ill-health made her spirits uncertain—but it made no difference. If he knew that his rival had bribed a turnkey to carry letters to her, he never interfered. He left them as much liberty as he could. De

Menil's imprudence, however, brought him under the displeasure of the Governor, who sent him in strict confinement to a distant part of the Bastille. Jeanne fancied him wretched and ill-treated, and in her distress appealed to her unchanging friend, owning that she had deceived him, and that want of other interests had turned sport into earnest. The kind Lieutenant could not at first answer her. With an effort he said at last, "My dear friend, you know I am devoted to you. I am going to put that beyond doubt, but first you must tell me how you stand with M. De Menil. If he means to make your lot happier—I cannot, it seems—I will help in anything which tends to that, or even to your satisfaction. But if he is only playing with you, it becomes neither of us to keep up a correspondence through me; for your own sake, you must give him up."

Jeanne assured him that the Chevalier was in earnest. He asked why they had not trusted in him. She said that De Menil had insisted on secrecy, and he answered, as well he might, that they need not have feared him.

All that he could do at this time was to bring a note from De Menil. She was deeply touched, knowing what it must have cost him, and how entirely his thoughts were for her.

Even prisoners in the Bastille contrived to communicate with each other, as we have seen. Davisard, who belonged to the Court of Sceaux, next contrived to let Mademoiselle Delaunay know that he wished to say something in private to her. She was now allowed to

dine in company with two other captives, and a day was secretly fixed between them when Davisard should come into their *salon*, while all their servants were on the alert to give notice should any of the authorities approach. He stole in; the two others drew back, that he might speak freely. He looked cautiously around, and whispered, "Mademoiselle! you have been nine months in prison. It is very hard!"—"Is that what you came to say?" she asked, astonished at his wasting the precious moments. Finding that it really was all, she called her companions back, angry and ashamed of all the pains taken to secure the interview. He had only wanted to see her. "Any woman is an angel in the eyes of a prisoner," Jeanne used to say. Soon afterwards M. Davisard fell ill, or feigned to be so. The Regent did not wish his captive to cause a scandal by dying in prison, and sent an order for his release. "Is it not a trick?" he asked, on seeing it.

"No," said the Governor; "it is all right."

"My stockings and breeches! quick! quick!" exclaimed the invalid, jumping out of bed, and he had dressed, was cured, and gone, almost in the same instant.

An order came that all concerned in the Spanish plot should be allowed to live together. Evidently their punishment approached its end. It was a hard blow to M. de Maisonrouge, who, now that Jeanne and the Chevalier were constantly together, saw as little of her as he could, only seeking to make her comfortable,

furnishing her room afresh, and putting up a mantelpiece on which she could place her book and snuff-box. Only those who have wanted necessaries can appreciate the delight which so simple a thing gave her. Her second winter in the Bastille approached. One after another, her companions were set free ; one after another they told all they knew, this being the condition on which liberty was restored to them. Madame du Maine had been kept all this time in strict captivity, apart from husband and children. "Let M. d'Orléans judge of my pains by my pleasures," she said once, after a vain attempt to amuse herself. In spite of the care with which she was watched, some news from without reached her, but distorted and imperfectly told, adding to her anxieties and misleading her. Jeanne was happier in her entire ignorance of all that was passing beyond her four walls. Miserable in her captivity, and alarmed at hearing that her husband was dangerously ill, the Duchesse consented to make a general confession to the Regent. Jeanne was questioned again, that her evidence might be collated with that of her mistress ; but being uncertain as to what the Duchesse had really owned, she would tell nothing. They threatened her with lifelong imprisonment in the Bastille. "It is not a bad home for a woman with no fortune," she replied. "If I know nothing, I can tell nothing ; and if Madame la Duchesse had told me anything, still less would I own it." One of her examiners could not help saying with admiration that it would be well for the Duchesse had

she had no other confidante. "How come you to be so fearless?" he added; "had some one drawn your horoscope?"

"The horoscope of any one born to such ill-fortune as mine is badly drawn," she answered, sadly. "One knows that one will be unhappy—what matter how?" The Chevalier De Menil had received an order of release, and was so glad to be liberated, even though banished from Paris, that he bade Jeanne a hearty and almost joyous farewell. She saw at once how little depth there was in his fancied affection, and was deeply hurt and grieved. Her own captivity became stricter. Instead of dining and drinking coffee in the Governor's house, she was confined to her room, as a punishment for refusing to tell the secrets of her mistress. M. de Maisonrouge was more concerned than she, for to her it was a relief to have some apparent reason for the grief which she could not conceal, and which was really caused by mortification at De Menil's conduct. "I am picked out like the ass in the fable," she said, when the Lieutenant marvelled at this severity on the part of the Regent; "he only ate a mouthful of hay, and was executed instead of the other beast, more guilty but more mighty than he."

M. De Menil did not at once forget or neglect her, so she received news of him, thanks to the unwearied kindness of M. de Maisonrouge. Meanwhile, Madame du Maine returned to Sceaux, but her husband refused to see her, or allow her children to be with her. Trouble softened her for the moment, and she remem-

bered Jeanne, and managed to send her a kind note, saying that she knew her too well to be surprised at the fidelity which she had shown. Jeanne was quite aware that out of sight usually meant out of mind with her mistress, and she was much pleased by this token of remembrance. A long MS. accompanied it, explaining what Madame du Maine had confessed, that she might know how much she was free to tell. Eager to read it, she forgot the risk of being caught in the act, and had hardly time to hide it when M. de Maisonrouge entered. His affection for her was never allowed to interfere with his duty to the King, and he would have felt bound to seize the papers had he seen them, but Jeanne had flung them into a box, and he took her alarm for ill-humour, asked no questions, and soon went away. She would have begun to read again, had not Rondel urged her to wait till they were locked up for the night. She wrote to her mistress, and sealed the packet up, making a preconcerted signal from her window which M. de Malesieux could see from his. He had first received, and had forwarded the parcel to her, through the turnkey, who took it back, for gold was powerful even in the heart of the Bastille. Madame du Maine had done her best in her confession to exculpate Jeanne, but the Regent still refused to liberate her, saying that she had not fulfilled his condition of owning her complicity, and that he insisted on her abandoning her ridiculous heroism. She had always maintained her personal innocence, and now strongly objected to making

anything which could be construed into a confession of guilt. Her maid, instead of complaining of a life which must have been even duller to her than to Jeanne, exhorted her to stand firm, saying that they were used to it, and could very well bear it a little longer, and Jeanne held out until the Duchesse sent a written order to tell all that she knew. Then she spoke, taking care to dwell on the pains which Madame du Maine had taken to keep her husband in ignorance of the Spanish plot. The Regent was ill-pleased, but sent an order for her release. Jeanne saw M. de Maisonrouge hurrying across the inner court, holding up a paper for her to see, as she stood at her window. His kind, honest face was full of mingled joy and regret. "You are free," he exclaimed, as he unlocked the door which was to close on her no more. "I lose you! I would have given my life to hasten this hour. But I shall see you no more! What will become of me?"

Jeanne hardly understood her own feelings, accustomed though she was to analyse them. Her prison life was over; she should soon learn whether the Chevalier de Menil were true, or not, of which she had grave doubts. She wished to see the Duchesse, but her old troubled existence would begin again. She had been freer in the Bastille than at Sceaux, whither she was ordered at once, but no means of conveyance had been provided, and she sent to beg her old blind Abbé to let his carriage take her, first, to see him in his apartment at the Temple, under whose chestnut-trees he loved to

sit, and then to convey her to Sceaux. It was sent, but she found him too ill even to rejoice at her liberation, though he had grieved much over her captivity.

"I saw," she sadly comments, "how indifferent everything which does not relieve them is to the sick." She had expected to delight him by her visit, and could not help being chilled and disappointed. He died three weeks afterwards, so that this singular friendship was never renewed.

Mademoiselle Delaunay dared not linger beside him, for her time belonged now to her mistress. When she reached Sceaux, Madame du Maine was driving in the gardens. Seeing Jeanne, she made her coachman stop, and exclaimed, "Ah! here is Mademoiselle Delaunay; I am very glad to see you again." She kissed Jeanne, and drove on. Jeanne found a new room allotted to her, with a fire-place and window, and she was treated more as a lady and less as a servant, but the jealousies which this aroused were very painful. The nights were again passed in reading aloud, and in conversation; M. du Maine had forgiven his wife, and returned to Sceaux, but few people had yet rallied round them. Still, little by little, the old tumultuous fantastic life began again. Captivity and danger had only been an interlude in it; the dainty egotism, the entire conviction of Madame du Maine that this world was created for her, remained unchanged. She had only added a little additional dread of ennui. Plays and pastorals, literature and philosophy, again filled the air. Voltaire summed it all

up when he wrote, "Present my respects to Madame du Maine. I advise you, when she is dying, to administer a comedy instead of extreme unction to her. One dies as one has lived." He came to Sceaux, and saw it all. Madame du Châtelet came too. On one occasion every one forgot that they were expected; supper was just over when they entered, and no beds were ready. Some one had to yield his to Voltaire, and did it with an ill grâce. A room was hastily prepared for Madame du Châtelet, who had to make her own bed, no servant having attended to it. They had come to act Voltaire's comedy of "Le Comte de Boursoufle," at the wish of the Duchesse du Maine. The divine Emily went all over the château on the next morning, till she found a room which she liked, where she could place six or seven tables, to spread out her papers and calculations upon, and furnished it with articles pillaged from other apartments. What a strange idea it all gives of the confusion and irregularity of the court! The piece was played, and succeeded, for Voltaire was fairly popular, though his companion was detested. The guests departed, and the day after Jeanne received a letter four pages long, besides a note, all to beseech her to find the comedy which Voltaire had left, he knew not where, to send the prologue, not by post, but by a safe hand, lest it should be copied, and shut up the play "under a hundred locks." Jeanne dryly observes that one proved sufficient.

Her imprisonment had brought her into fashion.

"Among the faithless faithful only found," her old friends were proud of her, and new ones gathered round her. It is characteristic of the age, that amongst the intimates of the irreproachable Mademoiselle Delaunay should be found the equally irreproachable Madame de Lambert, and the witty and wicked friend of Horace Walpole, Madame du Deffand. Amongst those who sought her was not De Menil, who had not only grown indifferent, but was now at the feet of some other lady, whom, as it chanced, Jeanne was acquainted with. Dignity came to her aid, as it always did when she was hard pushed, and she continued to visit her as if De Menil had never existed. After all, she had never really loved but once, though she tried to believe herself attached to De Menil. Like Madame du Deffand, she might have said, "One desires a support; one lets oneself be allured by the hope of having found it; it is a dream which circumstances dissipate, and on which they have the effect of an awaking."

It could not have been for the interest of any one belonging to the Regent's party to seek Jeanne's society, but one who she thought had forgotten her, and whom she hoped that she had forgotten, came out of those hostile ranks to find her. M. de Silly, counting on the friendship of which he was sure, even if he guessed no more, sought her, and confided to her the anxieties which now filled his mind. She could not but marvel a little at his blindness when he related to her, of all people, that he had fallen in love with a beautiful

woman, whose truth he doubted, as well he might, since in loving himself she failed in her duty to her husband. He came to Jeanne to ask advice. She took the sin very much as a matter of course, and thought none the worse of him, but her patience was sorely tried by his vacillations, and then she was startled by his asking her to write a letter which he might copy to break off the affair. Nothing proved to her how invincible was the love which she had thought vanquished, as her having heard and aided him throughout this affair. A confidante of the lady in question knew that Jeanne was informed of the matter, though by no means to what an extent, and said indignantly, "M. de Silly never loved my friend. If you had seen the letters which he has lately written, you would be certain of that."

"They were not very tender," as Jeanne observes in those memoirs, where she tells the story with strange candour, "but to be sure it was not he who composed them."

Jeanne maintained a steady correspondence after this with M. de Silly. He kept her letters carefully, and they were all returned to her after his suicide, caused, it is said by contemporaries, by disappointed ambition. There is no account of that tragedy in her memoirs, no word describing her feelings. Almost everything else that affected her she set down, plainly, sternly, as if writing of an indifferent person, but here there is a silence, full of pathos. "My letters were faithfully returned to me," she says; and the next paragraph simply

adds, "The rest of my life, though long, contains nothing interesting." There is neither complaint nor murmur. She never complains, and often writes gaily, with humour very unusual in a Frenchwoman; but the heart-ache is always perceptible through the stubborn courage and the brave smile. One of her greatest admirers, M. Ste. Beuve, decides that, though her life was a sad one, she was recompensed by her powers of observation and reflective mind. It is rather the consolation of a man of letters than of a woman, even in the cold and brilliant eighteenth century.

M. de Maisonrouge died a year or so after she left the Bastille. There were prospects of marriage, which fell through; longings for a quiet life; her need of something to care for grew intolerable. She re-visited St. Louis, hoping for tranquillity, but found herself *fêted*, surrounded, and questioned, until her head grew dizzy. It was all changed, and those who had loved her best were gone. Once she sought admission into another convent, but was rejected, the Prioress either fearing to displease Madame du Maine, who had been kept in ignorance of the plan, or seeing that weariness of life is not love of Heaven. If even in the Bastille Jeanne had regretted the relaxation of her imprisonment, when it allowed her room to be invaded by her fellow captives, and displeased De Menil by lamenting her old solitude, how insupportable must Sceaux have been to her! The Duchesse began to fear that she might lose her useful companion, and immediately began to prize her more.

As the ladies of the court resolutely treated Jeanne on the footing of a servant, and she could neither accompany her mistress into society nor drive out with her, Madame du Maine resolved to do away with a distinction which was inconvenient to her, and ennoble Jeanne whether she would or not, by finding her a husband. After long search, "for some officer in the Swiss Guards, who would marry a woman with neither birth nor wealth, beauty nor youth; a marvellous man, hardly to be found in the thirteen cantons," as Jeanne says, a widower with two daughters was discovered. Although stubborn at times, Jeanne was often curiously passive: she did not much care whether this marriage were arranged or not. Distrustful of her own weakness, she saw no other means of escaping from Sceaux, which would be the result if it took place, while she thought it much more likely to fall through. She had passed middle age, and had been bound to the chariot of Madame du Maine more than twenty years.

As the gentleman selected for Jeanne had never heard of her, the proposal could not come from him. Madame du Maine caused it to be made by a mutual acquaintance, who guaranteed that he possessed a little house near Paris, a flock of sheep, some cows, an orchard, and a poultry yard. He would not be reluctant to secure a little more money, or a step in the army. Jeanne was taken to spend a day at his house, and when she went away, he begged her to accept the fattest and whitest of his lambs. It was gallant, though both of them had

passed the age for playing at shepherd and shepherdess. Jeanne accepted the lamb, and went away thinking that there was something peaceful, if prosaic, in the life offered her, but the only person eager about the marriage was Madame du Maine, who never could endure any delay in gratifying a fancy, and harassed her husband until he promoted the Baron de Staal. If he were promoted, he had engaged to marry Jeanne. She was startled at finding herself bound, and would have drawn back, but her imperious mistress would not hear of it; the plan was hers, therefore it must be carried out; and she consoled Jeanne by assuring her that she should not leave her service, but was to spend part of her time at Sceaux, and part with her husband.

Poor Jeanne foresaw a double slavery, and fell ill of perplexity and distress. Unfortunately for her, she recovered, and was ordered to prepare at once for her marriage. The Duchesse was as enchanted as if a reluctant bride and an elderly bridegroom were the most charming of sights; she gave Jeanne her trousseau, and M. du Maine secured her the pension which he had allowed her since her imprisonment in the Bastille. A friend gave her a handsome snuffbox, which appears to have been the only wedding present which she received. Her reception in her new home was melancholy enough. The daughters, much annoyed at the marriage, would not appear until positively ordered to do so by their angry father; no one attempted to welcome the poor bride, who knew herself an intruder, and felt so desolate

and unhappy that she could not restrain her tears, as she sat in the house which seemed to belong to any one rather than the new mistress, "all amazed to find herself married." With one daughter, however, she soon made friends, but she had no opportunity for establishing herself on her proper footing in her new family, for Madame du Maine speedily summoned her back to Sceaux. M. de Staal hoped that Jeanne's favour might lead to further promotion for himself, and readily parted with her, returning to the old life with his daughters, which had suited them all very well. Madame du Maine had had Jeanne married to place her on a level with her ladies, but though she returned as the Baronne de Staal, she was almost as much looked down on as before; the Duchesse found that she dared not—Bourbon Condé though she was—treat her exactly like the high-born countesses and marchionesses about her, and Jeanne discovered that whatever the Roman Church may teach, "marriage is an inferior sacrament to baptism, since it cannot wash out the original sin" of humble birth.

Far from being freed from the chains of Sceaux, they were only bound faster round her. When her husband asked her to come home for a short time, as he was going away for a considerable period, Madame du Maine broke into a passion of astonishment and anger, and treated her as if guilty of the basest ingratitude. Jeanne might have rebelled, but the fatal illness of the Duc du Maine, which lasted many months, made her feel that she was really necessary to the Duchesse, who saw

clearly how great his loss would be, and was not without affection for him.

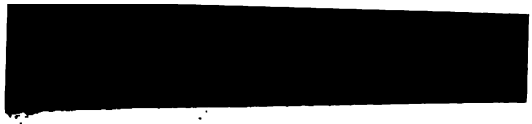
He died of cancer in the face, and she attended him unweariedly; his death was fatal to her ambition, and to Jeanne's chance of better fortunes, but it did not release the latter from Sceaux. As Baronne de Staal, she led much the same life as before; her one outlet was writing to her friends and composing her memoirs. She hesitated a little as to whether she should give them to the public, after her death, and was especially anxious to explain how she came to be interested in so unworthy a man as De Menil. Perhaps this was the MS. of which she speaks as "so thick that it frightened her." As given to the world these memoirs are brief, consisting of one short volume, but a great number of her letters exist besides. Her style is remarkably terse; there is never a superfluous word, and there is a felicity of expression which no translation can do justice to. We hear of her in other memoirs and letters. Grimm speaks of her, not flatteringly, as far from pretty, and often out of spirits—no wonder!—but adds that when at ease amongst those who suited her, nothing could come up to her gay and brilliant conversation. It is almost impossible not to compare these memoirs with those of another femme de chambre, who also wrote admirably, Madame de Motteville; but the parallel is hardly fair. Madame de Motteville, like Jeanne, was an honest woman in a corrupt court, but she had a mistress who esteemed her, and whom she could thoroughly

esteem. She had a calmer nature than Jeanne; no warmer feeling than friendship ever moved her, and she enjoyed her position, which, as femme de chambre to Anne of Austria, and niece of a bishop, was very different to that of Jeanne.

The sad life of Mademoiselle Delaunay ended sadly. Her health gave way when she was but little past middle age: it had been cruelly tried by Madame du Maine's *nuits blanches*, and sight and hearing gradually failed her. Sensation itself grew dull. "I care no more for the spring," she once said. "I am so tired of seeing flowers and hearing about them, that I long for snow and frost." This was no outburst of pain, but the weariness of one who could feel pain still, but not pleasure. No trace appears of that devotion in which so many women of the preceding century took refuge when the world failed them. Jeanne Delaunay's life is melancholy to the last. She died in 1750, before the Baron de Staal; Madame du Maine survived her five years, and as soon as her death rendered it prudent, the memoirs were published. One cannot but wonder whether M. de Staal had read them, or what he thought of the picture which his wife gave of their marriage. They were exceedingly popular, and one edition after another appeared, with no important variations. Fontenelle was almost the only one to criticise them, saying that they were elegantly written, but not worth reading. Trublet answered that women would agree with him, but men would not. In point of fact, their value has increased with age, and

those very details which appeared to Fontenelle too trivial to be worth recording, now enable us to see the time and position in which the writer lived, as faithfully and unflatteringly as if reflected in a mirror.

At the Revolution Sceaux was sold as national property. The stately château was pulled down; the fine park destroyed; but the patriotism of the Mayor saved the garden where once had been a menagerie, and it was bought by him as a public promenade. The greater part of the library was dispersed; and by way of utilizing the religious works, they were about to be sent to the Arsenal, that they might be made into cartridges, when a second-hand bookseller stepped in, supplied the Arsenal with waste paper, and secretly conveyed the packages from Sceaux to England, where the books fetched very large prices. Sceaux was amongst the innumerable things, large and small, destined to perish in the Revolution; the green and smiling valley is little altered, but the château, the woods and gardens, the stately avenue, and the Court, with its despotic Fairy Queen, are all gone for ever into the past.



THE DAME ANOBLIE.

THE GIRLHOOD OF MADAME D'ABRANTÈS.

So far, so fast the eger drave,
  The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow, seething wave,
  Sobbed in the grasses at our feet.
The feet had hardly time to flee,
Before the flood was at the knee,
And all the world was in the sea!

JEAN INGELOW.

I RECOLLECT nothing of childish gaiety, wrote Laurette Permon Duchesse d'Abrantès, in her old age: "I never knew what it was to be free from care. As soon as I could understand anything, I was taught to watch all my looks and gestures, for who dared feel sure that the merest trifle might not endanger his life? I shall never forget how the police visited our house at Toulouse and threatened my father, because, while playing at 'La Tour, prends garde,' I had been heard to say to a child five years old, 'You shall be M. le Dauphin.' We lived in constant danger; each one obliged to watch not only himself but others, and the stakes in this game were heads."

When did this child live, over whom such a shadow of terror was thrown from her cradle? She was born in

1784, just before France dashed perceptibly over the precipice of Revolution.

By her mother's side, Laurette was of Greek descent. In the year 1676, about three thousand Greeks left their homes, led by Constantine Comnenus, and settled at Paomia, in Corsica, which was ceded to them by Genoa, without much regard to the old inhabitants, between whom and the colonists there was such a deadly hatred, that no settlers on the borders of the Red Indian country could have led a more difficult and perilous life than did these colonists for a hundred years and more. The little colony spoke its own language, intermarried, and looked on the savage Corsicans with true Greek contempt for barbarians. The Comneni were chiefs of the settlement, wore violet and scarlet in Imperial fashion, and received peculiar honours from their clergy up to the reign of Louis XVI., when Corsica was made over to France. So great was the indignation of the then head of the colony at finding his privileges abolished and his rank denied, that he resolved his line should end with himself and his three sons. The eldest he forced to become a priest; the second, Demetrius, protested vehemently against such a destiny, but the father was deaf to his entreaties, announced that both he and the youngest son, as soon as he was old enough, should become ecclesiastics; and sent him to be educated at the Jesuit College of the Propaganda at Rome. Thence he was recalled by the sudden death of his father, which left him head of the colony (the eldest brother being a

priest), and with a mother and young sister to care for. Among the oldest and closest friends of his family were the Bonapartes, whose name, before it took its Italian form, was Calomeros, and who claimed relationship with the Comneni. There has been much doubt, however, whether this claim could be substantiated; but Laurette and her mother, at any rate, were fully convinced of it. This friendship influenced the whole of Laurette Permon's life. Her mother, the prettiest girl in the island, notwithstanding her noble birth, was allowed to marry a rich roturier, M. Permon. Proud as she was of her Greek origin, she had become a true daughter of Corsica. "It is there that one is free!" she would exclaim, with a mountaineer's passionate love for his home, as she clasped her little daughter fast; and she would sing some hunter's or herdsman's song in the charming voice which, when she spoke, could take the most caressing as well as the most imperative tones, expressing that impetuous vivacity which was one of her many fascinations. She never could tolerate Bonaparte's affectation, in after years, of having forgotten Italian. "I am a Frenchman," he would say; on which Madame Permon, twirling her pretty little ebony spinning-wheel so fast that the thread broke half a dozen times in a minute, would exclaim, "What do you mean with your 'I'm a Frenchman?' Does any one say that you are a Chinese? But however French you may be, you were born in a province called Corsica. If a man be born in Auvergne, does that make him less French? Do not talk such

nonsense, or I shall think that the honours which your Republics show you have turned your head!"

In general, Napoleon Bonaparte did not take such rebuffs patiently; but he was truly attached to Madame Permon, even though she had presumed to show him kindness when as a penniless scholar he came from his school in Champagne to the École Militaire in Paris. Sometimes a tender recollection of his native island awoke in him, and he would say, addressing Madame Permon by her family name, "Signora Panoria, let us talk of Corsica: let us talk of Signora Lætitia."

It was by this name that he called his mother, when amongst friends, or when speaking to her herself, not always with filial respect. "Signora Lætitia," he would exclaim, "you do not know how to deal with a Court. Look at your daughters; one would suppose them born princesses; but as for you, though I have given you a fine house, an estate, a large fortune, you live like a bourgeoise of the Rue St. Denis!" As he mounted the ladder of fortune, recollections of Corsica, and his old obscure, poverty-stricken life, became more and more distasteful to him.

At the time of Laurette's birth, her family were at Montpellier. The American war was just over. Her birth nearly cost Madame Permon's life, and so ill was she that she was quite unaware that a daughter had been born to her—nay, she had forgotten that there had been any hopes of such an event, and as,

during her slow recovery, she made no inquiries after her baby, and shrank from all allusion to her illness with a nervous horror which she could never overcome, M. Permon fancied that she must have a rooted aversion to the poor infant which had cost her so much. It was provided with a nurse, and kept out of sight, the father trying by his extreme love and care to make up to the unconscious little one for its mother's supposed dislike. Five months after its birth, Madame Permon was able to sit up, and enjoy the delicious sights and sounds of a southern spring from her balcony. Her husband, on whose breast she was leaning, was planning an excursion to those blue and distant Pyrenees, which appear like a vision on the sunset sky of Montpellier, hoping that the change would restore her strength, when he suddenly felt her start violently. She seized his arm, and cried, with her eyes fixed on a nurse carrying a baby, in the garden below, "Charles! what is that? is it my baby? had I a baby?" The nurse was hastily summoned, and the happy mother clasped her little one with ecstasy, which touched M. Permon and her eldest son (who was sixteen years old, and godfather to the child) to the very heart.

Young as the baby was, she perceived that a stranger held her; turned her face away, and held out her dimpled hands to the father and brother, whose lace ruffles she already knew how to grasp. Madame Permon burst into tears. She had always been the fondest of mothers, and could not bear to see herself thus repulsed. "Oh, my little one," she used to say, leaning over the cradle by

her bed-side, "how I must love you to make up for those five months!"

The love between Madame Permon and this little daughter became peculiarly ardent, and remained so to the last day of Madame Permon's life. Little Laurette had the happiness of growing up in one of those affectionate, united families which did exist in France even in the worst times. Less, of course, is heard of them than of the dissipated and turbulent ones, so that we are hardly sufficiently aware of the quiet family life which went on, not only in the provinces, but in Paris itself. The eldest daughter, Cécile Permon, was brought up in a convent, and the kind of inevitable estrangement caused between parents and children by this kind of education is very evident when her feeling towards Madame Permon is contrasted with that of Laurette. Cécile returned home almost as a stranger, and though affectionate and obedient, and fondly loved by her mother, she always felt an awe and restraint when with Madame Permon, which made her conceal her deepest feelings, and only allowed the mother to discover them through friends with whom the young girl was at her ease. Perhaps it was some perception of this unfavourable result which made Madame Permon refuse to let Laurette leave her. As long as M. Permon lived, he taught Laurette admirably, and later her brother Albert was her tutor. By the time that Laurette required instruction, the old routine had been destroyed by the writings of Rousseau, and the approach of the Revolu-

tion. Bonaparte, as soon as he had the power, inaugurated a new system of education, by which France has ever since been influenced. As a boy, he had keenly felt the faults of the old system, and had once been severely rebuked for saying, "If I were master, things would be very different, and it would be better for all." He was abruptly told that such a speech came very ill from one who was educated by the Royal bounty. Colouring crimson, he answered, "I am not educated by the King, but by the State." "There is no difference," was the angry reply. The time was at hand when the difference should be felt, and Bonaparte seems never to have forgotten this scene. The polytechnic, central, and normal schools, and many other schemes for public instruction, were all watched over by him with the keenest interest, and his appointment of Madame Campan to be head of his school for girls, proves that he valued the education of women as much as men.

While the Permons lived at Montpellier, M. Permon came one day to tell his wife that there were three Corsicans lodging at a small inn in the town, one of whom was very ill. "Go and see who they are," she cried; "how can you come and tell me that a countryman of mine is allowed to lie ill at an inn? It is not like you, Charles!" and thus exclaiming, she put his hat on his head, and took him by the shoulders to hurry him out. Her interest in the invalid was redoubled when she found that he was Joseph Bonaparte,

father of Napoleon. He was taken into the Permon house, lovingly tended, and died there, leaving his family very poor, as indeed they had been before. Sir Hudson Lowe, who, strangely enough, happened to know them well in those early days, speaks of the girls running about barefoot, and in the meanest dress.

When the Permons left Montpellier for Paris, M. Permon, intending to buy the profitable office of *fermier général*, his wife's first thought was for her old friend's children. Marianne Bonaparte had been admitted into St. Cyr, which had remained unaltered from the time of its foundation by Madame de Maintenon. When sent for to see Madame Permon, she came in with swollen eyes, and at the first kind word burst into tears. At first she would not own what had vexed her; by and by she confessed that her troubles, like her brother's at the *école militaire*, arose from poverty. The pupils in her class were about to give a farewell fête to a girl about to leave school, and she could not contribute her share of ten francs. The sum in itself was not enormous, but Napoleon was perfectly right in protesting against such taxes being levied on children whose means were professedly small. He had accompanied Madame Permon, and, on hearing this, hastily put his hand into his pocket, but was obliged to draw it out empty, while his pale face grew scarlet with annoyance. In a like case he had haughtily refused to accept money, but Marianne gladly took what Madame Permon offered her. This little affair irritated Napoleon so much that he made himself

intolerable at school, and was provided with a lieutenancy in the artillery chiefly to get rid of him. He came full of boyish triumph to display his uniform to the Permons, looking absurd enough as he strode about in the great boots which were entirely out of proportion with his thin legs. Later his face became fine, and even beautiful, but at this time he was awkward, thin, small, and extremely touchy. There was a general laugh at his appearance; and Cécile, then a girl of thirteen years old, home on a holiday from her convent, was so full of mischievous raillery that Napoleon exclaimed disdainfully, "Any one can see that you are only a little schoolgirl!"

Cécile had her vanity, too, and it was hurt. She looked at his costume, and retorted, "And you are only Puss in Boots!"

The universal amusement piqued Napoleon keenly. Every one saw his annoyance; but he said no more, and afterwards brought Cécile the story of Puss in Boots, with a toy for Laurette, which he had made on purpose, representing a cat running before the carriage of the Marquis of Carabas. The whole matter would have been forgotten by Laurette, but for a circumstance which recalled it to her years afterwards, when she was a bride, and Napoleon a very great man. For some trivial reason he had bestowed on her husband, General Junot, the nickname of Marquis of Carabas, a joke at which Junot laughed good-humouredly; but the young wife was much vexed by the sobriquet being adopted

by a courtier who aped Napoleon on all occasions. She told her mother, adding, that if Junot heard of it, the consequences might be serious. A mirthful look crossed Madame Permon's face. She gave Laurette advice; which was duly followed the next time that Junot was addressed by Bonaparte as Marquis of Carabas. "*Mon ami*," interposed Laurette, "when we go to your estates, mind that you do not forget a special member of our train, or I will not go, and I am sure that the General* will say I am right."

"What is that?" asked Napoleon.

"Puss in Boots to run before our carriage."

Every one laughed, but Bonaparte alone knew the malice lurking in her speech. How he looked no words can describe. Laurette continued gravely, "I have a toy given me when I was a child, which you can have as a model."

No more passed; but when, several days after, the courtier began jesting on the subject of Junot's Marquisate, he was confounded by an abrupt reproof from Bonaparte. "If you wish to ape me," he said, with the awful look before which all trembled, "choose a better subject." And later in the day he came up to Laurette, pinched her unceremoniously, and said, "Little plague, you are witty, but ill-natured; no one likes a woman who makes herself feared."

Bonaparte never again alluded to the Marquis of Carabas.

* Bonaparte.

Public troubles began to make themselves felt in the quietest homes almost as soon as the Permons reached Paris. In 1791, M. Permon had affronted a tradesman, who had behaved in an impertinent manner; this man, Thurion, became secretary of the section of that part of Paris where the Permons lived. He proved a dangerous enemy; M. Permon had forgotten his insolence, but he had not forgotten the rebuff which he had received, and one day he came to make a domiciliary visit. The mere name frightened all the family, but M. Permon was more angry than alarmed. He was shaving, and advanced, razor in hand, with an angry gesture. A gesture was just then enough to cost a man his head.

"I am here to execute the law," said Thirion.

"Well, and what does the law desire through such a worthy instrument?" "I am here to ask your age and profession, and to demand why you went to Coblentz?" Coblentz was the head-quarters of Royalist plots. M. Permon, who had all along had the strongest inclination to turn Thirion out of the house, was now so indignant that words failed him. He drew up his tall elegant figure, and looked full at the low-bred fellow who was gratifying his private spite under cover of an odious law. "Where is your order?" he said, when he could command himself.

"My order is sufficiently proved by my presence."

"Show me your order, and I will see in you only the public functionary."

Again Thirion refused; again a violent altercation arose, and M. Permon had just seized a stout bamboo, which he was whirling over the heads of Thirion, his two brothers, and his shopboy, none of whom had courage to lay hands on him, when Madame Permon hurried in, in exceeding terror, which communicated itself to little Laurette, whom she held out to him with an agonized intreaty that he would be calm for her sake. Meanwhile Thirion and his companions slipped away to report the contumacious conduct of the citizen Permon. Laurette began to cry from the infection of the general terror, Madame Permon was weeping bitterly, as was Cécile; M. Permon stood pale and trembling with anger. In the midst entered Bonaparte, now an officer, but poor, almost unknown, and without any political influence. "This is infamous!" he cried, on hearing what had happened. "What! four men force their way in, and refuse to produce their order! Thirion must have an old grudge to satisfy. I will see to this."

He hurried out, but when he spoke on the subject at his club, he found that Thirion had been beforehand with him, and raised up a storm of indignation against M. Permon for his disrespectful conduct towards the emissary of the law. The danger was great; at this time such an accusatiou put a man's life in the utmost peril. Two days later, while the family were dreading every instant that M. Permon would be arrested, came the name day of Laurette.

"Time has paled my recollection of many things,"

she wrote, when an old woman, "but some are as terribly distinct as ever. Never, in spite of the lapse of years, shall I forget that terrible 10th of August. As long as I could remember, my mother had made this a happy day to me, both before and after. Three months beforehand, I and my young friends used to look forward to it. My little room was filled with flowers, bon-bons, and toys. This year it was ushered in by ever-increasing tumult and disorder; "No more kings: let us be republicans," proclaimed the newspapers; "No kings, no protectors, no regents: let us make an end of these man-devourers," shouted the clubs. Crowds choked up the streets, besieged the Assembly with petitions, or rather menaces, signed The People, surged like an angry sea around the Tuileries. "They will not assassinate me," said Louis XVI. with mournful calmness to his agonized family; "I shall die in open day, and as a king." And he added, "My life will content the people; they will spare my wife and children." Alas! every day showed more plainly that none, however innocent, however young, would be spared!

The 10th of August was ushered in by the ominous sound of the tocsin, calling the Parisians to arms. The guards around the Tuileries were doubled; the Swiss Guard sat awaiting the course of events in silence, their guns in their hands, on the steps of that staircase which their blood was soon to hallow. "The lamp-light flickering on their arms, the sound of the butt end of some guns striking on the marble, the *Qui vive* spoken

low by the sentinels, gave the palace the look of a besieged camp. The red uniforms of these 800 Swiss, seated or lying on the landings, on the steps, against the balustrade, gave the staircase already a look as of a river of blood."* All the hope of the royal family was there; amongst their other friends was only indecision, fear, and jealousy; among their foes a terrible unity. "Defence is hopeless," said a French officer to Madame Campan on this fatal night; "the only chance would be from the king's energy, and that is the one virtue which he has not." And the fatal truth of his words soon appeared. All speedily became utter confusion throughout the palace, as terror grew overpowering, and the mob of the faubourgs comprehended more and more clearly that it alone reigned. "All Paris is marching against us," said the Syndic-General to the King, who silently submitted, and followed him to the National Assembly, leaving the Palace and the faithful Swiss Guard to its fate. What need to recapitulate the horrors which ensued? horrors still fresh, though the greater part of a century has passed away since that brave blood dyed the Escalier des Princes, and many tempests have desolated Paris, and the Tuileries were given up to sack and slaughter.

Consternation, as of a city taken by assault, pervaded Paris. The feelings of private individuals, too insignificant, it might be thought, to be concerned in these mighty events, are vividly described by Laurette Permon.

* Lamartine.

"The 10th," she wrote, "was not only horrible from the shouts, the cannonade, and the groans of the wounded under our windows, but because we were very anxious about my father and brother; the latter wanted to be everywhere at once, to protect us, and rescue his friends. Towards mid-day he came in with some one wrapped up in a bourgeois great-coat. They were seeking this man to massacre him. We hid him in my own little room, and I was told what to say if he were sought for in our house. From that day I began to learn, for a stranger's sake, the trembling caution which I had to practise long after for the sake of those dear to me. The day went on, yet my father did not return. My mother wept and wrung her hands; my brother looked out constantly from the porte cochère, and even ventured upon the quais, but he only learned the deposition of the king. The uproar seemed ceasing, though occasional shots were still heard; the most startling sight now to be seen was groups of drunken men and women, blaspheming and howling horribly. Evening came; still my father never returned. At last Albert caught sight of some one coming along the quai, whose air of distinction marked my father. He was walking cautiously, often glancing behind him, and stopped when he saw some one at our door; but when my brother spoke, he hurried on; bade him keep the door open; went back and fetched a man whom he had left in the Arcade de la Monnaie. This person walked with evident difficulty; my father gave him his arm, and led him to his

own bedroom, silencing our inquiries, and bidding us only think of him whom he had brought. When the stranger was released from his mufflings, we recognized M. de Bévy, one of the chief officers of the body guard. He was bloody, pale, exhausted. What a sight it was! He seemed more overwhelmed by the misfortunes of this day than by his wounds. He drew me to him—"Poor Loulou!" he said, noticing that I turned pale and trembled, noticing the stain of blood upon his hands; "this is a sad fête for you, dear child. Heavens! what a fête!"

His head sank on his breast, and his tall form, nearly six feet high, seemed to bow under the weight of his grief.

Poor little maiden of eight years old! what a birthday indeed! From the midnight of August 9th, since the tocsin had first aroused Paris, the air had been thick with the smoke of artillery, whose incessant rattle stunned the ear, while the threats of the insurgents rose above the heavy rolling of the artillery-waggons along the streets, and the dread of columns of armed men. All night, drunken crowds perambulated the city, howling and cursing, seeking victims to add to the five thousand who had already perished. Fiends, in the form of women, were here, as everywhere in the Revolution, foremost in deeds of cruelty.* Neither of the fugitives, hidden in the Permon house, dared quit it. Another day of terror came. M. Permon was writing

* Alison.

a letter of credit for M. de Bévy, who had succeeded in finding a safer refuge, when a butcher asked for an interview, and warned M. Permon that he had been denounced as having sheltered the enemies of his country, and immediately after came an urgent warning from another quarter, accompanied by a passport for M. Permon and his wife for the South of France. There was no possibility of taking the children. The poor mother was in agony at the thought of leaving them in Paris at such a time, but the passport being made out for herself as well as her husband, he could not, if he would, go alone; it was hastily settled that the girl should be sent to a school in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and that Albert, now twenty-four years of age, should take a lodging as near as possible. The farewells were inexpressibly bitter; it is hard to say whether Cécile or Albert suffered most, knowing that in all probability they should see their parents no more; or poor little Laurette, amazed at the change from the home where she was the darling of all, and never left her mother, to school-life without nurse or mother—dimly aware that those whom she loved best were in the utmost danger, and that the happy home-life was at an end for ever. What the parting was to the parents no words can say, and this is but one of a thousand similar scenes enacted at this time in every part of France.

At the Pension where the two girls were sent, was a kind of man-of-all-work, by name Jacquemart. He had a singularly repulsive countenance, and Albert Permon

used to declare that he must be fated to some tragic end; but his voice and manner were strangely out of keeping with his appearance and occupation, being those of a man of high birth. Albert used to drive to the Pension daily in his *whisky*, a kind of very high cabriolet; and one day he dashed up at full speed, just as Jacquemart was crossing the street with a heavy load of wood; there was no time to profit by the shout of warning raised by Albert, who only avoided running over the man by pulling up suddenly, at great danger to himself. Jacquemart saw and remembered the danger to which Albert had exposed himself. The end of August came, and Jacquemart, meeting young Permon, said, emphatically, "Stay here this evening and look after your sisters. Do not go home again;" and seeing that Albert hesitated, much surprised, he added still more energetically, "I tell you, stay; you will be close to your sisters, and if you want a helping hand, well—we shall be forthcoming." He would give no explanation of his mysterious words, to which Albert paid less attention than they deserved.

The next day saw the massacres in the prisons. Young Permon, not knowing who might be the next victims, hurried to his sisters, first burning every paper which might have compromised him, but, with incredible rashness, instead of going on foot and disguising as much as possible that he was a gentleman, he drove as usual with his groom in the *whisky*. Hideous groups of drunken men and women were dancing and howling

in the streets, many naked to the waist; pikes in their hands from which floated fragments of clothing; their arms and breasts were crimsoned with blood. On seeing the whisky they burst into a roar of fury. "An aristocrat! down with him! down with him!" Something was raised high on a pike, and the tossing, heaving crowd brought it so near that it dashed against Albert's very face: he knew the features soiled with blood—the long fair dabbled tresses—it was the head of the Princesse de Lamballe, and he fell with one cry senseless at the bottom of the carriage.

His servant caught the reins, and urged on the fiery horse, amid the curses of the crowd, which gave way; but one man leaped up behind, and was still clinging to the cabriolet when it stopped at the door of the school. He leaped down, seized Albert in his arms, and carried him in. "The monsters! the wretches!" he exclaimed; "poor young man! they have killed him too!" It was Jacquemart!

Albert was not dead, but a brain fever came on, in which he raved continually of the hideous scene, and of the livid lips that had touched his. After a time news came that his parents had reached Toulouse, and later their children were able to join them there, Madame Permon risking all dangers to return and fetch them. They saw Jacquemart no more, and who he was, or how he came among that savage crowd of murderers, Laurette never knew; but in 1802, Albert Permon, then Commissary-General of Police at Marseilles, received

orders from Napoleon to keep special watch over a man calling himself Raymonet, who lived a hermit life in a little house on the shore of the Mediterranean, a leader in the massacres of September, and one of the assassins of Madame de Lamballe. This man died a lingering and horrible death from suffocation, refusing to see a priest, or hear a word on religion. Albert Permon never had the courage to visit this man, connected with his most dreadful recollections, but from what he learned he always believed Jacquemart and Raymonet to be one and the same person.

PART II.

"O giorni orrendi
In cosi verde etate."
LEOPARDI.

TOULOUSE, once the seat of a Parliament, and a manufacturing and restless city, proved a melancholy and insecure refuge for the Permons. Every family was in mourning, or trembling lest some of its members should fall under the axe of the guillotine; already those which had not lost a husband, brother, father, or wife, were rare exceptions, and the prisons were full of victims awaiting their doom. The Reign of Terror was at its height. No distance from Paris, no insignificance, made one place safer than another; there was a guillotine in every town; a prison in every village. Scarcely were the Permons settled in an apartment which they hired, when the President of their section summoned M. Permon before him. M. Permon was ill, and in a state of such nervous irritability, that his wife dared not let him go, and sent Albert to represent him. The President, a fat, short-sighted little man, given to drinking, and very ill-tempered, could not be made to understand why the son came instead of the father. "What are you here for?" he bellowed; "why are you not with the army, you coward, you aristocrat? I know how it is; I have

been warned, and we shall see about it." Albert, exceedingly alarmed for the whole family, vainly tried to make his explanation heard. The danger was so great, especially as M. Permon would certainly compromise them all if he and the President came face to face, that Madame Permon determined to write to a fellow-countryman of hers, much mixed up with the politics of the day—the Corsican, Salicetti. He and M. Permon had had a sharp dispute the very last time they had met; for though the latter had served in the American army, and was professedly a Liberal in politics, yet, like many others at that time, he was thoroughly loyal, devoted to Madame Elizabeth, who had shown him much kindness, and detested the Red Republicanism of Salicetti. Yet it was to this man only that they could look for protection. To his credit, be it told, that he at once used all his influence in their favour, named Albert his secretary, and added that should young Permon's principles prevent his accepting the post, he need say nothing about it, but remain with his family, keeping the brevet of appointment at hand to show to any troublesome patriot. At an after time the Permons repaid his kindness with interest.

Albert accepted the secretaryship, but for a time kept it a secret from his father, whose heart was breaking under the misfortunes of France and the murder of the royal family. When he heard that the life of even the venerated Madame Elizabeth was threatened, it was with the utmost difficulty that his wife could prevent his

rushing on certain death by returning to Paris. "I owe her all I have!" he said; "I must—I will save her." "You cannot; you will only destroy yourself. Think of our children!" his poor wife argued. The news of Madame Elizabeth's execution was literally his death-blow. For days he would neither leave his room, nor let any one see him except Laurette, and when she crept timidly in, she would stand doubting if this sickly, pale, thin man, crouched in an arm-chair, and wrapped in a white great-coat, could be the father whom a few months before she had known so gay, so upright, so handsome. Once he looked up as he heard her sobbing. "Poor Loulou!" he said, calling her by her pet name, and taking her on his knee; "are you crying for me? Weep, my child, weep and pray; that is all that we can do now for those we love best." He would rouse himself with an effort, and continue the lessons which he had been in the habit of giving her; but his health visibly declined. Madame Permon, too, fell ill, and went to the Pyrenees for a time; but he could not accompany her, as he was detained at Toulouse in strict captivity. The fall of Robespierre hardly lessened the danger of those suspected of being aristrocrats; executions continued, and there was still the same universal and painful feeling of insecurity. Communications were exchanged in the most singular manner; letters were sent in pies, inside fowls, in the lining of dresses; and with such a parcel would come a written message, "I have sent what was ordered;" and, as nothing had been

ordered, this was sufficient to give notice of a hidden message. Madame Permon always lamented over the unpicking necessary when a letter had been sent in some elegant article of dress from Paris, and once, when nothing very alarming was occurring, actually wore a bonnet, in the crown of which she knew well there was a note, before she could make up her mind to own its existence to her husband, knowing that he would instantly require the bonnet to be sacrificed. When the Reign of Terror ceased, perilous as all still was, M. Permon's friends urged his return to Paris, where, they assured him, a brilliant career was open to him. "How little they know!" he answered, with weary bitterness. "I am but the shadow of my old self. All I care for is to go back and die quietly."

It was again Madame Permon who went to Paris to ascertain whether her family could safely return. Albert had become very uneasy at the lengths to which Salicetti was going in politics, and at the deadly enmity between him and Bonaparte, and threw up his secretaryship; but he, too, went to Paris, as did Laurette; but Cécile, who had married a young officer, remained with her husband's family. They staid some little time at Paris, and old friends began to reappear in Madame Permon's salon, though many, many gaps there were, bearing dreadful witness to the tempest that had swept over France in the last year. Among these old friends came Bonaparte, whose angular thinness and awkwardness struck Laurette afresh; but he always had that clear,

keen glance which he retained when in all other respects he was greatly altered, and there was that singularly winning smile, "*si fin, si naïf*," which disarmed his greatest enemies. Madame Permon was rejoiced to see him again, though his untidy dress and unceremonious ways tried her patience—never very lasting. She spoke of Salicetti's ill-will towards him, which had well-nigh brought him to the scaffold, and he answered with unusual emotion, "He would fain have injured me, but *my star* forbade it still. I must not boast of that star, for who knows what my fate may be?"

At this time he was so wretchedly poor that, but for the generous assistance of his aide-de-camp, Junot, he would almost have starved. Every penny that Junot became master of, he shared with his friend, somewhat to the discontent of his father, who used to ask, "Who and what is this Napoleon Bonaparte that you should give up everything for his sake?" The Permons heard much of this devoted friendship from their maid, Mariette, with whom Bonaparte's valet was in love, a circumstance which seemed trivial enough, but nothing was trivial in those days; and this flirtation of two servants nearly brought several people to the guillotine at an after time. Laurette used thus to hear much of Junot, and admired his devotion to his friend long before she knew him personally.

Paris was alarmingly unquiet. The Republicans were at daggers drawn among themselves; and the scarcity of bread caused alarming riots. Cécile sent provisions

secretly to her family at great risk, as it was against the law to import provisions into Paris. So weary did Madame Permon grow of the incessant political discussions, that she forbade any of her guests to introduce the subject. She had a pretty, imperative way which none could resist; but she herself soon saw that this prohibition reduced her friends to silence; for what else was there to talk of? Literature seemed dead; the theatres offered nothing of interest; poetry was mute, for though a soldier's laurels may be watered with blood, it destroys those of the poet. Do what she would, Madame Permon, with all her talent "de tenir salon," was forced to yield and keep peace, as best she might, amongst the dissentient spirits which sometimes met in her drawing-room. On one occasion Bonaparte was there, with Albert Permon, and the ingenious Romme, who, but a few days later, died by his own hand at the bar of the tribunal, to escape the shame of a public execution. Salicetti, lost in gloomy previsions, was walking up and down, taking no share in the conversation, at once hostile and constrained, which the rest were keeping up. His creaking boots filled up the measure of Madame Permon's annoyance. "Salicetti," she cried, "can you neither rest nor let others do so?" He stopped suddenly, looked at her with absent eyes, and bowing deeply, said, "A thousand thanks, but I have already taken two cups, and it upsets my nerves." And then he marched up and down again, his boots creaking at every step. Thereupon up rose Madame

Permon, crossed the salon with her graceful, undulating step, and putting her hand on his great arm, she suddenly turned him round. He stood gazing in astonishment, his thoughts suddenly recalled to the present scene. "Salicetti!" said she, imperiously, "when I speak I expect to be listened to; and when I order, I choose to be obeyed. I know it is rather despotic; but you see I grow too old to adopt new maxims, and, moreover, I will not do it! Women are now-a-days but queens without a kingdom; we have been dethroned; I know it only too well, but I keep up a little power in my own house. There, at all events, I am supreme, and my subjects must obey. Do you want to escape my rule?"

Salicetti's dark face had brightened while he listened to the gay and bewitching hostess, and he took her hands and kissed them, asking how he had merited her reprimand; every one hastened to tell him of his singular reply to her first address, and he confessed to having heard not a word, but had taken it for granted that she had offered him a cup of tea. But politics soon got the upper hand again, and Albert Permon began indignantly describing his disgust at having seen Couthon carried in his arm-chair by four men to the Place Bellecourt, in unhappy Lyons, daintily dressed and perfumed, as for a fête, with a little silver hammer in his hand, with which he was toying. From one house to another he was carried, and at the door of each he struck three light blows, coughed behind his

scented handkerchief, and gently said, "I strike thee once, twice, thrice, in the name of the French Republic." And thus he passed along, leaving the houses—lately happy homes—to destruction. Thus was Lyons punished for want of affection to the new Republic.

Romme rose up as Albert spoke, and answered bitterly, "They say that the stones of the Pyramids have voices to tell us of the wonders of Egypt. What will the accusing stones of the Place Bellecourt tell the traveller who hereafter may sit upon them? Heaven grant they may not be a monument to the shame of the French nation! Ah, citizen Permon is right! we live in awful times!"

"Long ago all those stones ought to have been thrown into the Rhone and the Saone," was the cool reply of Salicetti, sitting down and stifling a yawn; "or sold to the builders."

"That would be the best plan," answered another guest, a very rich proprietor; "it would require no labour, and government might make something by it."

Madame Permon turned white. Bonaparte started up, pushed back his chair with visible anger, and taking young Permon's arm, muttered, "I am off. I am afraid of seeing your house pulled down. How can you receive that animal? a rascal without a bit of talent!" And he went away with Albert.

Madame Permon grew sick of Paris life, and, very anxious about her husband's health, prepared to return to the South of France; but a game of life and death

had first to be played out, preceded by an adventure of Laurette's, that was not a little alarming.

The day for leaving Paris being fixed, Laurette and the maid, Mariette, went out to do sundry commissions for friends in Bordeaux, whither M. Permon had gone. They went in a hackney coach, and were returning home with their ribbons and artificial flowers, when they were suddenly surrounded by a crowd of those furious, drunken women, who figured in every scene of the Revolution. "Long live the constitution of '93!" they shrieked: "Give us back our patriots!" Fifty or sixty pressed round the carriage; Mariette began to sob, and Laurette was equally frightened; but, as she afterwards said, she *could* not cry in the sight of those horrible creatures, one of whom shouted to the driver, who chanced to be her husband, that she and her friends wanted his fiacre, and turned a deaf and angry ear to his remonstrances. "I tell thee I am tired, and so are these patriots!" she shrieked. "We have to go to that miserable Convention; we will get bread out of them, or the President shall know, like thee, that my fist is heavy. Come, no more, yes or no; open thy whisky, and look sharp, I say!"

Laurette was all this time pulling the man's carmagnole, and imploring him to set her down. He paid no attention, and tried to urge on his horses, upon which his formidable wife flung the door open. Laurette darted out; but Marietta fell on her knees in her carriage, paralyzed with terror. The virago

lifted up Laurette in her stout arms, exclaiming,—"What's the matter, my chicken? Thou art the colour of curd. And thou animal (to her husband), couldst thou not say it was a child in the whisky, thou rabbit's brains? Should I have turned her out, then, thou idiot? Why, the poor little cat is truly afraid! Is the other thy mamma, my little darling?"

"No, citoyenne; my bonne."

"What is the woman whimpering about, as if she had lost father and mother?"

"Listen, Marianne," shouted another in ecstasy; "she is asking mercy! She thinks we shall kill her! No doubt she is a princess in disguise."

The storm of laughter only frightened Marietta the more; she shrieked as a large, coarse woman began to drag her out of the carriage, on which, with a great oath, the mistress of the fiacre ordered her to let the girl alone; pushed Laurette back, asked her husband whence he had brought them, slammed the door, and kissing her with a resounding smack, cried, "Whip on, and tell your mamma to go out with you next time herself, my lass!"

Laurette found Madame Permon anxiously watching for her, and the sight of her mother, with the sudden sense of relief, brought such a flood of tears, that she could not explain what had happened. When Bonaparte heard that she had not shed a tear during this really frightful scene, he said, "Mademoiselle Loulou was too proud to cry before fish-women." "In any case,

it was a Spartan feeling, and she was right," replied her mother, as Bonaparte laughed at the inborn Greek pride which was always so strong in Madame Permon.

May 18th, 1795, was another day of carnage added to all those which had already desolated Paris. The terrible Faubourg St. Antoine was again in arms, and its starving population threatened indiscriminate massacre and pillage. The extremity of the danger caused all who had anything to lose to unite and protect one another; proscriptions and arrests followed, as a matter of course. Salicetti, to the surprise of all, was not named in the list of the proscribed, though he had been prominent in the Jacobin ranks, and Madame Permon rejoiced at his exemption, remembering that she owed him much, but added that she should certainly drop his acquaintance, as she could not countenance his principles. "I hope it will be long before I see his face again," she said to a few friends who had come to dine with her; for the routine of ordinary life mingled startlingly with death and terror. This was a farewell party before she went to Bordeaux. Bonaparte was expected, but had not yet appeared. He and Salicetti were now known to be deadly enemies.

Just before dinner, Mariette told Madame Permon that some one wanted to speak to her, adding, "I know who it is; Madame can come." Laurette followed her mother, and found, standing in the bedroom of Madame Permon, Salicetti! His lips were as white as his teeth, his

black Corsican eyes glowed like live coals. "I am proscribed," he whispered; "in other words, condemned to death, Madame Permon. I hope I have not been mistaken in counting on your generosity; surely you will save me? Surely I need not remind you that I saved your son and your husband?"

Madame Permon seized his hand and hurried him into Laurette's room. She thought that she heard the voice of Bonaparte. It would be certain death to all were Salicetti found. "I will not waste words," she said; "you have a right to all that I can do. But my son, my daughter—ask my life if you will, but not theirs. I could only hide you for a few hours, and it would not save you, only bring me and my son to the guillotine. I do owe you gratitude; decide yourself if it should go so far."

Salicetti's only reply was that she could safely hide him; that she might take him in disguise to Gascony, and he urged again and again that she owed it to him to make the attempt. She answered, with despair, that in a lodging the landlady of which held opposite opinions to his, there was no hope of concealing him, and while she was speaking, Albert knocked, surprised at her absence, and saying that all her guests had come except Bonaparte, who had sent an excuse. She joined her hands in thankfulness; it seemed a respite from death, for she was sure that the keen eye of Bonaparte would have discovered her agitation. Dismissing Albert

without admitting him, she went back to Salicetti, who was sitting with his head sunk in his hands, but who now looked up to renew his entreaties. She stood silent, now red, now pale, shaken by his wild pleadings, yet realizing with anguish through it all, that if she did not refuse his entreaties, the lives of herself and her children—perhaps even of her absent husband—were at stake. Salicetti thought that he read refusal in her agitated silence, and rose, murmuring something inaudible, to go. "Stay," she said, catching his arm, "This roof is yours; my son must pay his debt, and I my husband's."

"That is settled, then," Salicetti answered, suddenly recovering his composure; "go and dine—Mariette will take care of me." "Young girl," he added, detaining Laurette, who, child as she was, had stood by comprehending all, and full of sympathy with her mother; "there was no way of hindering your knowing all this, but I need not tell you what the consequences of any indiscretion would be."

"Ah, you need not fear," Laurette replied, throwing her arms round her mother, who was looking at her with indescribable anguish. But well as Madame Permon knew the danger in which they all were, she was too generous to abandon a man, however selfish, however bad, who appealed to her thus. She was of a frank and lively disposition, with no gift for feigning, yet now she returned to her guests as calmly as if she had only been called away, as they supposed, on some little household

matter. Thus, for the second time in her short life, did Laurette share in a secret of life and death. She was now eleven years old.

At dinner the conversation turned on the late events. Laurette saw her mother change colour as Salicetti was spoken of with contempt and horror. No one guessed how near he was. The long evening ended at last, and then Madame Permon told Albert who was concealed in her apartment. It was too late to talk of prudence; all that remained to be done was to hide him as securely as possible. The mistress of this house, Madame Grétry, was called, and at the first trembling word of "proscription" she interrupted, "I have what we want, only you must change your apartment. There is a hiding-place in which four poor creatures were safely concealed during the Terror. It will save others, I hope, as long as I stay in this house." Salicetti took possession of it; this was the first step, but the real difficulty would be how to get him out of Paris, and there was the ordeal of a visit from Bonaparte to be gone through first. He came the next day, in his old great-coat, buttoned to the throat; his round hat drawn over his eyes, and a black cravat round his neck. It was not an elegant costume, but even had elegance been in fashion, Bonaparte never paid any attention to such matters. He brought a bunch of violets for Madame Permon, a politeness so unlike his usual habits that all were amused, little guessing that the violet was destined to become a badge of his party. He laughed too, and

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said suddenly, "Well, Madame Permon, so now Salicetti can taste for himself how bitter arrests are. The fruit must taste all the worse as he and his party planted the tree that produced it."

"What!" said Madame Permon, signing to Laurette to shut the door; "is Salicetti arrested?"

"How! did you not know that he is condemned to be tried for his life? I thought you knew it so well that you had hidden him in your own house."

"Here?" cried Madame Permon; "why, Napoleon, my dear boy, you must be crazy! In my own house? I have no house of my own. My dear General, do not say such things, pray; what have I done that you should sport with my life? it comes to that."

Bonaparte rose, walked slowly forward, stood before Madame Permon, crossed his arms on his breast, and looked at her without a word. She never changed colour nor winced before that gaze, but met it steadily. "Madame Permon," he said at last, "Salicetti is hidden here—do not interrupt me; I do not actually know it, but I say so because yesterday, at five o'clock, he was seen on the Boulevard, talking to Gauthier, who warned him not to go to the Convention. He then went this way. He has no acquaintance but yourself who would hazard life, and the lives of a whole family too, by taking him in. He has not been to the Palais Egalité. So he is here!"

Madame Permon had summoned all her calmness to her aid. "By what right could he ask it?" she replied

"He knows how we differ, and that I am just leaving here for Gascogny!"

"By what right! That is the truest thing that you have said yet, dear Madame Permon. To throw himself on the mercy of a lonely woman, who would be compromised by the few hours' shelter given to a fugitive who deserves death, is a baseness of which only he would be capable. You owe him gratitude. That is a letter of credit for which he demanded payment in person; is it not so, Mademoiselle Loulou?" he added, suddenly turning to Laurette, who sat at work in a window among trees and flowers, which she seemed to be absorbed in admiring, for she gave no answer.

"Laurette, my child, General Bonaparte spoke to you," said the poor mother, fearing least this silence should increase his suspicion. Laurette looked up with confusion, which however might very well pass as that of a young girl who feels that she has been rude. Bonaparte took her little hand in both his, and with a word of apology for having questioned the child, added, "Madame Permon, you are remarkably good, and this man is a wretch. You could not shut your door upon him, and he knew it. To expose you, and this child too——!" and then his indignation burst out, Madame Permon listening in trembling emotion, which betrayed itself by her answering in Italian although he was speaking French, for whenever she was deeply moved she involuntarily spoke either Italian or Greek. The French have never been able to admit that in all circumstances a lie is a lie; the

mensonge sublime has always been exalted to a virtue among them. She did not hesitate solemnly to affirm to her incredulous listener that Salicetti had been there, but only to go away again. Laurette sat quivering under the belief that Salicetti, hearing the abuse lavished on him by Bonaparte, must rush out of his hiding-place and confront him, but all remained still. At the end of an hour Bonaparte left them, saying, "Well, well—a thousand thanks, Madame Permon, and above all forgive me. But if you had been injured by that man as I have——"

When they went to Salicetti's hiding-place, they found him cold, senseless, and covered with blood. He had heard every word, and terror and anger combined had made him break a blood-vessel. When he could speak all his habitual courtesy seemed to have vanished; broken curses on Bonaparte, oaths and threats, succeeded one another. Laurette flew to her brother, imploring him to hasten to Madame Permon; the poor child was shaking all over, and her horror of Salicetti was deepened by this scene, and by the perception that Bonaparte had justice on his side. Bonaparte paid them another visit the next day, but did not name his enemy. The Permons were alarmed by this strange reticence, but their thoughts were fully occupied by Salicetti, who became dangerously ill and delirious, always fancying some of his partisans were beside him, either dying or failing in the attempt to commit suicide, and that he was lying in a room where everything was

blood-red. Yet, amid these horrible fancies, while he uttered perpetual imprecations and blasphemies, he never raised his voice; the feeling of danger, the absolute necessity for concealment, was present to the unhappy man even in the height of delirium, and there was something singularly fearful in hearing such sentiments uttered in those low and modulated tones. The secret of his presence was entrusted to a young Greek physician, who cured him, and then a passport was obtained with much difficulty for Madame Permon, Laurette, and their valet, *i. e.*, Salicetti. Before they went Bonaparte came again, and alarmed them by his mysterious conversation. He seemed to think that they should never meet again, and bade Madame Permon remember that he had given her more than he knew he possessed. When she asked what he could mean, he replied that she should know before quitting Paris. They passed the gates safely. The first time that they stopped to change horses, one of the postillions came up to the carriage window, saying, "Citoyenne Permon!" She put out her head, and asked, in alarm, what he wanted. Salicetti was sitting on the box, and everything unexpected was alarming. The man gave her a letter, which she took with surprise, offering him some payment for his trouble. He refused, saying that he had been already paid by the young man. This amused Madame Permon, whose gay spirits revived with a rebound, as Paris was left further and further

behind. "Bonaparte will make people think me a young girl torn from her lover," said she, "but what can he have to write about?"

The approach of day enabled her to read her letter; and all mirth vanished at once from her face and voice. "I never choose to seem duped," Bonaparte wrote; "and I should appear so to you, did I not tell you that for more than three weeks I have known Salicetti to be in your house. Remember what I said, Madame Permon, even on the 1st of Prairial" (May 18th). "I was then almost certain; I am now entirely so. . . . . I could have avenged myself, and did not do it." There was a dignified message to Salicetti, and kind wishes for the prosperity of the Permons, with advice never to remain long in any large town during their journey down the west of France. Madame Permon sat lost in wonder after reading this letter; she handed it to Laurette, bidding her, in Greek, with a glance at Mariette, to read it to herself. Mariette was pale, and her eyes very red; it was easy to see that she had betrayed the secret of Salicetti's hiding-place to her lover, the valet of Bonaparte, and was now terrified for the consequences. They had trusted too much to her discretion; though even now they could not doubt her affection. Madame Permon was divided between dismay at the danger they had been in and admiration for the generosity of Bonaparte—a generosity totally unexpected, and which, indeed, he rarely again displayed; but when she told Salicetti, he only said that he saw nothing

fine in it; what else could Bonaparte have done? Madame Permon exchanged looks with Laurette; and both felt how rightly Bonaparte had judged this man, in declaring him to be thoroughly selfish and base. He was solely preoccupied with himself and his escape; he had not a thought for the Permons, who were all risking their lives for his sake. Madame Permon felt this with a woman's keen indignation; but it did not cross her mind to abandon her dangerous undertaking, and she knew her husband too well to fear his disapproval. In every place where they stopped they heard anathemas against Salicetti and the *Montagne*, or Red-Republican, party; and the general excitement alarmed them unspeakably. "Suppose he is recognized! the description of him may have been sent here," was ever Madame Permon's thought. Once they drove into a little town, where a mob had gathered; and as they stopped at the door of the little inn, cries arose of "Arrest him! arrest him! he is outlawed!" Laurette said, "I will see what it means." Her mother grasped her arm till it hurt her. "Go and see what it means?" she cried. "Stay here! What do you suppose it means? If this concerns us, it is—death!"

Mariette, who had gone into the kitchen, came hurrying back to say that a young priest had been seized by the populace, a man noted for his devoted fulfilment of his duties, and fearless attempts to restrain the excesses of his parishioners. His mother, the Baronne de Lavauret, had been thrown into prison,

and would only have left it for the scaffold but for the interposition of Madame Tallien, who also protected the son, with that kind-heartedness which made her almost worshipped. The young priest had ventured home, hoping to learn if his mother yet lived; and she, who, since through Madame Tallien his "rights of citizenship had been restored," to use the phrase then customary, had been seeking by every means to learn what had become of him, hurried to meet him. What was their despair when, in defiance of all law, all justice, he was again arrested! When Madame Permon returned to her carriage, they saw the young priest surrounded by a crowd of furies. An elderly woman was on the outskirts of the crowd; her cap, on which a tri-colour cockade had been carelessly pinned, had fallen back, exposing her black hair streaked with white; and her dark eyes searched the faces of the throng with almost the look of a savage animal, or were fixed on the priest. Her arms were crossed upon her breast; she never moved. "Oh, poor woman! poor woman!" cried Madame Permon; "she is his mother!"

It was so, but even could they have rendered assistance, for Salicetti's sake they must have avoided attracting attention. They had to go on their way without knowing how this sad affair ended.

"1793 over again!" cried Madame Permon, "and this is what some wish to bring back!"

Salicetti looked straight out of the carriage window, and made no answer.

By way, possibly, of showing some gratitude to the Permons during this perilous journey, Salicetti bethought himself of asking that the eleven-year-old Laurette should be his wife. They had been obliged to alter their plans, and go to Toulouse, and were then in a vessel on the willow-bordered Garonne. Laurette, much annoyed by the coarse mockery of Salicetti, who heard her speaking to her mother of her longing for confirmation, had gone down into the little cabin which she shared with her mother. She sat at the one small window, and looked at the green banks which seemed to flit by, the silent villages, the landscape bathed in the lovely southern moonlight, and with her thoughts still dwelling on the subject which she and her mother had been speaking of, she looked sadly at the desolate churches, closed and deserted, their bells forbidden to sound, and their ministers proscribed and exiled. Salicetti's voice startled her, and she became suddenly aware that he and her mother had been on the deck for some time, in eager conversation. "That girl would make a second Charlotte Corday," he was saying. "What, she hates me? Yes, and this hatred for the man who has brought her mother into danger is admirable; I like her the better for it." And then he went on to speak of "a husband of twenty-two—handsome—full of promise." Laurette drew a deep breath of relief. "Ah! it is not himself, then!" she thought. Madame Permon closed the discussion by a decided refusal, and retreated to the cabin, where Laurette confessed what she had overheard. "I firmly

believe he *was* thinking of himself," said Madame Permon, "but I will not have my Loulou leave me in this way."

No more could be said, for Salicetti was heard entering his cabin, separated from that of the ladies only by a thin partition. This scene added to Laurette's detestation of him, and her longing to see him in a vessel bound for Italy, but it was with the utmost difficulty, after weeks of wandering and anxiety, that they found a vessel in which he could escape. The bound of relief which Laurette's heart gave when she saw him fairly on board a ship bound for Genoa, told her what a load of daily anxiety she had borne ever since he had been with them. She breathed deeply, looked at her mother, and embraced her with sudden vehemence and delight. A less light-hearted child would have been crushed by being mixed up so early with matters where life and death depended on constant caution being observed in every word and look; but to the end of her long and troubled life, Laurette was ever the same gay, thoughtless, bewitching creature, whether almost penniless, or a young wife surrounded by luxury, an ambassadress, or an old poor woman. In her old age, as in her childhood, the moment that she could turn from her troubles, she was as gay as a bird again.

PART III.

THE desire to obtain good medical advice for M. Permon made his family resolve on returning to Paris after some stay in the South of France, but it was a very sad return, owing to his fast failing health, and the excited state of the city, again in almost open insurrection. At night, sentinels went their rounds through the streets, and all precautions were taken, as in a besieged city. Domiciliary visits were constantly taking place, and every one able to bear arms was ordered to appear at his section. One afternoon, M. Permon was sleeping, exhausted by illness, and the house was kept as quiet as possible on his account. Suddenly, doors were violently opened, and three men entered, demanding, with brutal oaths, why M. Permon had not presented himself at his section. Madame Permon's explanation, supported by the landlord of the house, was not listened to. "He came here on the 28th of Fructidor (September 13th), nineteen days ago," they answered. "What does such an illness mean? *I* should have had time to die and come to life again three times over. Anyhow, we must see this Citizen Permon, illness or no illness; where is he? We *will* see him and speak to him."

"I have already told you that he is ill, citizen."

"It is no time to be ill when the country is in danger. Come, open that door!"

"You are mad, or a wretch!" cried Madame Permon, darting before the door. "Keep back, or beware!"

Astonished at this address, the men started back, staring at the resolute woman, who bade Laurette, in Greek, to fly to her father and keep him calm. Alas! the noise had roused him, and he was in great agitation. Laurette heard him muttering "Wretches! Poor country!" and neither she nor the sick nurse could soothe him. He asked for his wife, and Laurette ran to fetch her; the men were gone, but poor Madame Permon had fallen into a distressing nervous attack, to which she was subject after any emotions; she always made a desperate struggle to command herself, and never liked any one to be present at such times, but the attack often lasted two hours. Bonaparte had come in, and was trying to calm her, but had not dared to call any one, lest M. Permon should be alarmed. Laurette rubbed her hands, and gave her the medicine, which she took at such times; she had long been trained to act promptly and depend on herself on emergencies, and show no childish terrors; and Madame Permon presently recovered sufficiently to go to her husband, whose nervous terror had increased with every instant of delay. Two or three stormy days and nights followed; but some hope of conciliating the malcontents seemed dawning, when suddenly the boom of a heavy gun was heard. It was the signal for a general cannonade. The street

below the Permons' windows was filled with all the sounds and sights of civil war. At the sound of the first shot, M. Permon had uttered a cry, called wildly for help, and was instantly seized with violent delirium. Though the world had been in flames outside of his chamber, Laurette could hardly have spared a thought for it then, when she saw her father dying in agony, her poor mother lying white and exhausted across the foot of his bed, and her brother heart-broken as he watched by the father who had been the best and tenderest of friends and guides to him. The battle raged without, and at length ceased; but to these mourners all seemed indifferent but their one absorbing grief. M. Permon died four days afterwards.

Laurette was more than old enough to be confirmed; but hitherto it had been impossible, for she belonged to a generation to which religious observances had been forbidden, and who, if they knew anything of them, associated them with mystery and deadly peril. No words can give so clear an idea of this as did the touching picture, "Mass in the Reign of Terror," exhibited in London in 1862. The Parisians began to feel, however, an awakening desire for some offices of religion, and cautiously and timidly a few churches were reopened here and there in Paris. Madame Permon seized the opportunity of sending Laurette to be instructed and examined daily at half-past eight in the morning, in the Church of Bonne Nouvelle, where she was escorted by a good Benedictine nun, Sœur

Rosalie, whose convent existed no longer, but who sought to live as strict a life as possible. Each day, for six weeks, she made a long round to collect the young girls who attended the class held by M. de Cane, a venerable priest, whose teaching deeply impressed his catechumens, knowing, as they did, the dangers and sufferings which he had gone through in the Revolution, and that even now he incurred grave risks in thus openly assuming the office of a teacher of religion.

There was a celebration of Holy Communion held on Easter Monday, and now it appeared how greatly the feeling of the populace had veered round. Instead of opposition or insult, a crowd, full of interest and excitement, gathered so thickly, that it was hardly possible to reach the chancel. The Parisians, long deprived of all religious rites, seemed delighted to see the little flock of white-robed girls renew their vows, and many, who probably came with indifferent or scornful feelings, were strangely moved by this sight, which appealed to every pure feeling, and seemed to inaugurate a new and happier epoch for France, as if the late tumults had been the last gust of a dying storm, and a calmer day were dawning. The Mass preceded the Confirmation of the next day (some of the candidates partaking of it), and at the latter ceremony, even a denser crowd than before gathered, and numbers of women held up their little children to the Bishop, asking his blessing.

This happy time strengthened Laurette for much

privation and sorrow. Both she and her brother had insensibly acquired their father's habit of keeping from Madame Permon all that could harass or distress her. She had led a very simple and primitive life in Corsica, and when she came, a young bride, to France, she did not know the language of her new country, and her husband settled everything for her, made her life a long summer's day, and delighted in gratifying her natural tastes for everything beautiful. She took it for granted that after his death all would go on in the same way, and said, holding out her arms to her children with her charming smiles, "Your father married me penniless; I owe him everything, and now it is all yours. You will find me a place by your fireside."

But round this fireside she supposed that there would necessarily be a multitude of luxuries. Every woman of any fortune, at this time, had two lady's maids at least, with a valet who attended on her in-doors. She had a bath-room, perfumes, costly lace, the finest linen, elegant baskets to hold the myriad articles thought indispensable for her toilette, her apartments with their ample hearths, thick carpets, and curtains for winter, and abundance of choice flowers in summer. Everything which met the eye must be costly, beautiful, and have some good reason for being where it was. Once, when Madame Permon went to see a house, the luxury of which had caused a great sensation throughout Paris, she only found fault with it, saying, it suggested nothing but wealth. "Is it never inhabited?" she said, looking

round in vain for some signs that the mistress was accustomed to live in the splendid rooms. "For instance, why is there no work in this Chinese ivory basket? Scissors or a thimble should lie near it, and they might be as costly as you like—enamelled, or ornamented with pearls." When she heard what the furniture had cost, she almost sprang out of her chair. "I would fit up twenty houses with that sum!" she cried, "and you should see the difference! What is the good of having furniture of costly Indian woods in a room where no one sits? would it not have been far wiser to have spent the money on a richer covering, and a new shape, if needs must, but at least one which would not break one's back?" She was one of the few who had courage to be independent of fashion, and the Greek and Roman modes, newly introduced, exasperated her, and she would not hear a word in their favour. When Laurette married, she had her country house, near Jouy, furnished in the newest fashion, but Madame Permon obstinately refused to allow the upholsterer a voice in fitting up the apartment which she was to occupy, and had it fitted up with a luxurious elegance which Laurette herself allowed put the newer fashion to shame. The attempt at Spartan simplicity aimed at by a party among the Republicans had already proved a failure, and the luxury and extravagance which Napoleon greatly encouraged when he became Emperor was perhaps the more attractive from its contrast to the days when a man's life was in danger if he ventured to wear linen too fine or too clean.

Such tastes as Madame Permon's soon exhausted her slender resources; it became necessary to own to her how poor she was, and her children trembled to think what the effect would be on one so sensitive, so impetuous, when she heard that no papers could be found to show how M. Permon had invested the money which, early in the Revolution, he had transferred to England. He had never even told his son, who, in his perplexity, laid the matter before his little sister. The mystery remained inexplicable, and their money melted away so fast that but for Albert's procuring some employment they would have been penniless. Madame Permon took the confession of their poverty with such composure that it is probable she never realized what it meant, but when she found that her son must join the army in Italy, she was nearly broken-hearted. He reminded her how his dying father had left her and Laurette in his care, and that thus alone he could provide for them; and she submitted with something like despair. He spoke to Laurette apart just before he left them, saying with tender gravity, which the young girl never forgot, while he kissed her, "God will give you strength and judgment for your task, my poor child; trust in Him and yourself, and all will go well. I shall often write, and you must tell me everything. If my mother wishes for anything that you are not rich enough to get, write to me. I feel certain that God will not forsake two children whose sole care is their mother's happiness."

But before Albert joined the victorious army of Italy, a new blow had fallen on the Permons. Cécile, happily married to an officer of the name of De Geouffre, became the mother of a healthy child, and her husband had written in his joy, "My wife is so well, that she is already talking of taking our Adolphe to receive her mother's blessing. She is prettier than ever, as fresh as a rose. You may imagine, dear mamma, how glad all around her are; but our joy does not make us relax the care necessary at so severe a time of year, so you may be quite easy—no more anxieties; joy and gladness fill our hearts."

Five days after the arrival of this letter, Madame Permon was lying on her sofa, talking happy nonsense to her son and daughter, which ended by her saying, with tears in her eyes, "Cécile must make a charming young mother. How I should like to see her with her baby!" and she fell into a reverie, murmuring a low cradle song; Laurette and Albert also became silent; all was still in the street without. Suddenly there was a loud knocking at the door; both Albert and Laurette uttered a cry, and then burst out laughing at their own fright. Madame Permon put her hand to her head. "That knock hurt me," she said; "who can knock thus?" A letter was brought in. "Ah!" said Albert, "news of Cécile; it is De Geouffre's handwriting." "What relation can he have lost?" said Laurette, noticing the black seal. All the misfortunes which had already happened in her short life had not inspired her with that instinc-

tive apprehension of bad news which older people feel at any sudden event. Albert had turned very white, and Madame Permon started up, seized and glanced at the letter, and fell with a cry on her knees. Cécile was dead. Happy wife, happy mother, snatched away, too, in her early girlhood—such a loss ever awakens sympathy even in mere acquaintances, and there is a sense of an incomplete life, of something unnatural, to embitter the blow. There seems a hope unfulfilled, a life only half worked out, and the stroke is in many respects heavier than when one is taken away who is old and full of days. And Madame Permon felt her affliction the more bitterly because she was aware that the convent-bred Cécile had always stood in great awe of her, and never realized her love—at all events, until her marriage was decided upon. M. Permon had suffered so much from Republicans, that his wife detested them one and all; and although she could not object openly to the visits of M. de Geouffre, whose regiment was at Toulouse while the Permons were there, both she and M. Permon at once refused his request for Cécile's hand. She was then a very pretty, timid girl of sixteen, fresh from the convent, and feeling like a stranger amongst the family, whom she had only known during brief holidays. The young officer who sang with her, gazed at her, and talked to her as often as he could find an opportunity, won her heart, unguessed by Madame Permon, who only learned it through a fearless friend, and the confession of little Laurette that Cécile spent the nights in weep-

ing. M. Permon had become so great an invalid, that his wife was forced to decide all family affairs for him, and when she perceived that Cécile's health was visibly failing, the mother's love spoke louder even than her aversion to the Republicans. "So you love this man!" she said; "well, then, you shall marry him." And a month later Cécile became Madame de Geouffre, and her mother always treated the unwelcome son-in-law with perfect and most winning cordiality; but now the recollection of her indignant opposition came back. "Poor Cécile!" she would say; "such a short life, and I deprived her of six months' happiness which she might have had."

After her son had gone to Italy, Madame Permon fell dangerously ill, and Laurette, now fourteen years old, sat up with her night after night, nursing her for nearly six weeks, with the help of an excellent servant. The doctors lost hope, and felt obliged to tell the poor lonely child that she must be prepared to lose her mother. Happily her own indomitable hopefulnes sustained her even now. "Can nothing, nothing save her?" she asked. "Nature, and care never relaxed for a moment," they answered; "therefore you must yourself eat and drink in order to be able to give it;" and Laurette had the sense to attend to their advice. Madame Permon recovered; but both her life and poor little tired-out Laurette's health and reason were endangered by the sudden loss of common sense in the maid, who till then had been an admirable nurse.

Laurette had one night ventured to go to bed, having kissed her mother, and been blessed by her feeble voice. She fell into the sleep of exhaustion, from which she was startled by the maid shaking her arms, and faltering out, "Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle! good Heavens, my mistress is dead!" With one cry and spring, Laurette was by the bedside of her mother, flung herself on her, and called her wildly, as she saw her lie motionless, white as snow. Madame Permon awoke; she had been sleeping. It turned out that the maid, no doubt worn out with watching, had grown nervous, and going suddenly up to the bed, and seeing this still, alabaster-like face, had been seized with a wild panic, which drove her into Laurette's room. Madame Permon was too weak to be as much alarmed as Laurette expected; but the girl herself suffered so severely from the shock, that the doctors declared she had had a narrow escape from death or epilepsy. This long anxiety left her a thin pensive girl, with none of the rose-like freshness of Cécile, yet ready to revive again into child-like gaiety and enjoyment.

On the recovery of Madame Permon, her saloon again filled with friends, old and new. Amongst her intimates were the whole Bonaparte family, though she and Napoleon, at this time, were not good friends. She was hasty, and he was vindictive, and their mutual annoyance long rankled. Bonaparte was now in a very different position to what he had held when the Permons were last in Paris, and already they were recalling, with

amusement, the modest prediction of their cousin, Madame de St. Ange, a Greek Corsican by birth, and, like themselves, very intimate with the Bonaparte family. "Well! so one of Lætitia's sons is actually making his way! I really think he has it in him to become a general. Never should I have guessed it; I should have said that Joseph was the one..... How handsome Joseph is! how well-mannered! Napoleon is as ugly as a penguin, my dear; as obstinate as a mule, and has abominable manners, though he *is* your pupil!" To which Madame Permon had responded, "Nonsense; he has somehow vexed you, and, like a born Corsican, you cannot forget it."

This was in 1795. Quieter times had come at last. People had got tired of curing sore throats by cutting off heads; one could venture to wear clean linen without fear of being denounced by one's maid; nor were persons now cited before the Revolutionary Tribunal simply because they had a large fortune; indeed, that was a crime which the Revolution had swept away. The *Moniteur* was no longer sullied by its bloody list of names; but there were still prisoners in the Temple, still deportations to South America, and although the sky had cleared, there were often heard, as at the end of great storms, those single claps which tell of a past tempest. Yet gaiety returned; people were greedy of pleasure, though still trembling with uncertainty and apprehension; few people dared attract attention by receiving guests at their houses, except in the quietest manner; but, as if sporting with

the grim past, public entertainments were given, to which no one was admitted who had not had a near relation guillotined. At this Bal des Victimes, as it was called, appeared all that was left of the gay world of Paris. Many of the women with their hair cut short, because, when in prison, under daily expectation of death, they had cut it off and sent it as a last gift to those dear to them. This style of coiffure happened to be peculiarly becoming to the beautiful Madame Tallien, and the coiffures à la victime at once became the fashion. It was the fashion, too, to dance country dances à la victime, where the sets were composed of dancers who had lost a parent by the guillotine, and every one was charmed with the notion, and thought it full of sentiment.

Madame Permon ventured by degrees to indulge her love of society more openly, and her horrors of Republican officers must have greatly lessened, for she willingly permitted the visits of Andoche Junot, of whom Laurette had heard long before, and to whom she attached a romantic interest from his devoted love to Bonaparte. As his manners always betrayed, though she never would admit it, he was by birth bourgeois, and since, up to the time of the Revolution, no career in the army was open to that class in the State, he had studied law. On the first opportunity, however, he became a soldier, and from his headlong courage, and the terrific temper which later became like paroxysms of insanity, he gained from his comrades the expressive nickname of La Tempête. Napoleon first met him at Toulon, where he ordered him

to take some directions to an officer on an exposed spot, but first to put off the uniform, which made him dangerously conspicuous. Junot turned as red as a pomegranate. "I'm not a spy," was his abrupt answer; "I will go in my uniform, or not at all." "Then you will be shot." "What matter? You do not know me enough to care, and I care nothing either;" and he went off singing. "He will make his way," was Bonaparte's comment, and from that time he never lost sight of him.

Laurette did not love the Bonaparte sisters, though she admired the beauty of Marie Pauline (or Paulette, as she was called by her friends), and was frequently in their company. Pauline especially offended her by her grand airs and her harshness to her pretty little sister Annunciata, better known as Caroline, of whose beauty she was jealous. Laurette could never forget how one day, when the little schoolgirl came home for a holiday and ran in with her fair curls falling round her joyous rosy face and on her plump white shoulders, Pauline pushed her away ill-humouredly, exclaiming, "Mamma, you really ought to teach Annunciata" (the child particularly wished to be called Caroline) "better manners; she is just like a peasant girl from Fiumborbo."

Fiumborbo is a place in Corsica whose inhabitants are noted for their savage rudeness, and poor Annunciata went away silently, with her eyes full of tears. Evidently Madame Lætitia could not keep her family in the same good order as when they were poor and obscure in Corsica, and greatly afraid of the severe old

"Oncle le Chanoine," who once whipped Napoleon and kept him on bread and water for three days, for a theft which he had not committed. Pauline used often to receive a plain-spoken reprimand from her old friend, Madame Permon, who never was in the least awed, but rather amused, by the marvellous rising fortunes of the Bonapartes; yet so lovely was the unamiable girl that no one could help looking at her with delight, and Madame Permon herself took a never-ending pleasure in contemplating her. Madame Lætitia herself had been a beautiful woman; she had talent, and was courageous and sincere; popular she never could be, for the consciousness of her want of education, and the burden of an honour "unto which she was not born," made her afraid of committing some solecism if she talked, and she took refuge in stiff dignity. The only part of her new greatness which she really enjoyed was the office to which Napoleon appointed her, of "Protectrice Générale" of all the charitable establishments of France. She was ever haunted by a conviction that the good fortune of her family would not last, and used to say, when any one observed on her habitual economy, "Who knows whether some day I shall not have to maintain all these kings?"

But when Junot first came to Madame Permon's saloon the Bonapartes were not yet kings, though on the road to that distinction; for Napoleon was winning laurels in Italy, and the Directory was tottering to its fall, on that November 18th, 1799, which saw the

Consulate proclaimed. All the sons of Madame Lætitia were now married, but their wives, and especially Joséphine, wife of Napoleon, did not harmonize with the sisters and mother, and the disputes and intrigues which arose among them cost Napoleon much perplexity and vexation. Even at this time his family anxiously desired his divorce from Joséphine, whom they detested. Bonaparte was now the most popular man in France, except with the far-sighted amongst the Ultra-Republicans, who guessed his ambition, and whom he cordially detested, and the Royalists; but not only was he popular through the glory which he had gained for France, but because it was felt that his hand had held the helm steady, and that were he to perish in some of the many attemps to assassinate him, a new reign of terror would probably begin. One of his measures was to make Junot commandant of Paris, telling him when he appointed him to this most responsible place that he must add ten years to his age, and find a wife. His generals were used to such commands: indeed, very often he chose the wife for them, with little reference to their wishes; and all did not turn out as happily as the hasty marriage of Lavalette and Mademoiselle de Beauharnais. Junot said that he would obey; but "as for marrying an heiress," also part of his orders, "that was another thing, for heiresses are always as ugly as caterpillars." And he carried out his protest by falling in love honestly, and quite independent of the First Consul's orders, with Laurette Permon, now a brown pale girl of sixteen,

without a penny, but in his eyes a beauty. Junot came regularly every evening to Madame Permon's house, but as he only paid court to his hostess, and never spoke to Laurette, she thought nothing of it until one evening a young friend said reproachfully, "Is this the way you treat your friends? you are going to be married, and never told me."

Laurette turned pale, thinking of a marriage already proposed for her, which she disliked, but which had rather attracted her mother. The other girl continued, —"Well, is it not true? are you not to marry General Junot?"

"General Junot!" cried Laurette. "I hardly know him, and he does not know me! Is it likely that he would marry a penniless girl—he, the favourite of the First Consul, and one of the best matches in Paris!—where did you hear such nonsense?"

Albert was more clear-sighted, and Junot's formal demand for Laurette's hand did not take him by surprise. It is less perplexing to find him, mixed up as he was with the events of the time, and a personal friend of Bonaparte's, in favour of this marriage, than to see the fastidious Madame Permon receiving the news with joy. Perhaps her failing health and Laurette's lack of any dowry made her anxious in those troubled times to secure her a protector, and to regard this offer as brilliant good fortune. Albert ushered Junot into her bedroom, and the matter was decided between the three. But Junot, not belonging to the old régime, was unreasonable

enough to insist on ascertaining Laurette's wishes from herself. Madame Permon, much scandalized, assured him that it was unheard of; but Albert treacherously summoned his sister, and she came in, rather surprised, and looking inquiringly at the three smiling faces turned towards her. Junot rose, gave her his chair, and said gravely, "Mademoiselle, I am so happy as to be accepted as your husband by your mother and brother. But that will go for nothing at all, unless you yourself choose to have me. I know this step is not usual at all, but you know I am a rough soldier, and I want in this most important act to get as much as I give. Perhaps (he hesitated a little) you may be afraid to say."—Madame Permon interrupted him reproachfully, but he went on—"Excuse me, let me finish what I was saying. Will you tell me honestly whether you are willing to marry me, and consider well before answering."

Laurette sat mute, feeling as if it were all a dream, and yet conscious that on her answer depended her future fate. No one spoke for ten minutes at least, till Junot again urged her to say yes or no, and her mother and brother encouraged her to answer openly. But the poor girl's heart was beating so fast, and her head throbbing so much, that her chief feeling was that her obstinate silence could not be broken, and yet that it was becoming foolish. She astonished them all by starting up and flying out of the room, vainly pursued by Albert, who never guessed that she had fled to the loft at the very top of the house. When she thought

that Junot must be gone, she ventured down to her brother's room, where he petted and scolded her, and learned that she was willing to marry Junot, who, on learning it, caught Albert in his arms and hugged him, and then stamped with vexation on hearing that she had been scared into tears by his questions. Indeed, he was betrayed into such vehement language as might well have startled the ears polite of Madame Permon, but she took it much more calmly than hearing that Bonaparte knew nothing of his proposal. Albert, too, was seriously disturbed on hearing this, and a sharp discussion arose, ending in Junot's driving off at full speed to the Tuileries, to inform Bonaparte that he had obeyed him so as far as taking a wife went, but certainly not an heiress. Even Junot's stout heart failed him a little as he prepared to encounter that lightning look, which could be so sweet and so terrible. One of the aides-de-camp, Duroc, met him accidentally and remarked on his agitated looks, told him where the First Consul was, and let him pass. Junot told his tale as briefly as possible, and, after a little hesitation, Bonaparte's old affection for the Permons, and especially for Albert, whose talent for languages he had already utilized, was strong enough to induce him to consent. "I will give you 100,000 francs for a dowry—and 40,000 for the corbeille," he added. "And you will have a good, worthy brother-in-law."

Junot's choice caused much wonder in Paris. Some said that he married the daughter out of admiration for her charming mother; others, that he, a plebeian, was

ambitious of marrying the daughter of the Comneni, for the genealogy of Madame Permon had been submitted to and approved by that sternly conscientious censor, Chérin, and there could be no doubt of her noble descent, though the aristocrats of the Royalist party always raised an outcry at her pretensions. No one could understand Junot's love for the delicate-looking, mournful girl, whose power of conversation and charm of manner Paris had not yet discovered. Joséphine, who detested Junot, knowing that his revelations of her conduct had deeply displeased Bonaparte while in Egypt, secretly opposed this marriage, which alone, even had they had no affection for Laurette, was enough to make all the other members of that family delighted with it. Besides her aversion for Junot, Joséphine was always jealous of her husband's old friendship for the Permons.

Before Laurette's unmarried life ended, she had a terrible adventure, too characteristic of the times to be omitted here, which terrified her more than even the scenes of the Revolution. In the first year of the Consulate, Paris was kept in constant terror by robberies and murders, committed by bands of vagabonds known as "les chauffeurs," who pillaged not only country houses, maiming and torturing the owners to make them own where their money was hidden, but broke into houses even in the most frequented streets of the capital. It was not until much later that they were suppressed. Madame Permon had been ill, and, to please her, Albert

gave up an expedition which he had planned, and stayed at home. They spent a happy evening with several friends, who, as usual, dropped in; and Madame Permon went gaily to bed, saying that she felt better, and was sure that she should sleep. Laurette occupied the next room, the door between was closed, but not bolted, and she sat up reading till past midnight, no sound breaking the stillness but the heavy tread of the sentinel posted near the Church of the Capuchins, and his monotonous *Qui vive!* Laurette grew tired of her books, and discovered that it was a quarter to one. She listened, and heard her mother's quiet breathing, which told that she was asleep. Then, finding out that she was hungry, Laurette bethought herself that in the dining-room she should find bread and strawberries, and went lightly across the landing in search of them. She had seated herself at the table to eat them, when she fancied that Madame Permon might awake and call, and be alarmed at getting no answer. She rose hastily, and carried off her strawberries to her room, where she sat down gaily to eat them, gladdened by the thought that her mother was almost well. She and her mother had the first floor to themselves, Albert slept a story higher, the servants inhabited the third floor, and on the rez-de-chaussée were cellars, a kitchen, and offices. Laurette, from her mother's bad health and Albert's frequent absences, was necessarily absolute mistress of the establishment, and, young as she was, she kept good order. One of her rules was that by

midnight every servant should be in bed, and she was surprised and displeased when, as she ate her supper, she heard a sound in the lower rooms. There were stealthy steps; some one was creeping upstairs. "Why, it is one o'clock at night," she said, indignantly to herself, "and they declare that they never sit up late!" she went to the door, drawing back the first bolt cautiously, with intent to catch the delinquents in the act. She could hardly suppress her laughter, as she thought how dismayed all the faces would look. "It will be quite a picture!" she was thinking, when she heard some one stumbling against a bath on the landing place. Annoyed by a sound likely to rouse Madame Permon, she was drawing back the other bolt when it crossed her mind that no servant would have stumbled in the dark over an article which they all knew stood there; but if they were not servants, who—what were they? Laurette turned so dizzy that she could hardly stand, but in all her terror she silently refastened the first bolt. Then came the cracking which a wooden staircase makes under a heavy foot; people were going up to the second floor, and it was no step that she knew. The recollection of the *chauffeurs* filled her mind; she knew that lately a whole family had been murdered by them; a gentleman in that very street had only been rescued from them by the guests of Madame Permon, who had heard his cries; and they always took every precaution, posting sentinels, and shooting down every one who tried to give an alarm. "I shall try

all the same," Laurette whispered, as she stood listening intently. All was now still; so still that she thought she had only fancied these strange noises; so long a time seemed to have elapsed that when she looked at the clock, she could scarcely believe that only ten minutes had gone by. Her fear of alarming her dear invalid surmounted even her terror; she remained still, enduring the suspense with a loving courage that very few young daughters would have been capable of. Suddenly the loud cracking of the staircase was again heard; steps were coming down again—impossible now to hope it could be the servants. They avoided the bath this time, and two people sat down on a step, and whispered together. Laurette crept again to the door, and listened. She heard a few words which filled her with new terror. Albert was engaged in business, and had at that moment in the house a very large sum of money, not his own, but entrusted to him for various investments. His Italian valet knew this . . . . . perhaps he was in league with the *chauffeurs*. It was Albert's life, then, that was most in danger; they had supposed him from home; they would find his door locked, and himself within, and then. . . . . Laurette's heart stood still; the next moment she had flown into her mother's room to consult with her; no thought of sparing her alarm could restrain her now. The invalid had far less self-control than her young daughter; at Laurette's first word, Madame Permon started up and pulled her bell, uttering

shriek on shriek, which Laurette tried with despair to hush, dreading above all things lest Albert should hear, rush downstairs, and be murdered. But the sounds had startled the *chauffeurs;* they fled, springing through a window, and into a timber yard, where they had probably lurked all day. Albert, running down, found all the servants on foot, and all the household in commotion, while instruments for forcing locks lay scattered, —one already deep in the fastening of his own door— pincers, and keys. It was easy to see how the *chauffeurs* had got in. A long plank, laid from a wall to a window, had served as a bridge; and the Italian valet was quite guiltless of this crime, though, afterwards, Laurette caught him stealing money from her mother's desk. Albert hastened to call in the police, but the *chauffeurs* had escaped. Laurette was the chief sufferer from the adventure; she had a nervous fever, in which the scene, with every possible additional horror, seemed perpetually enacted before her; and long after, she could not cross that landing without turning faint. Had she remained in the dining-room to eat her strawberries, they would have seized her there; while she was wandering from room to room, these wretches were actually in the house. Albert, much alarmed for her health, took her to Dieppe, where she regained her strength; but six years afterwards, when Bonaparte made her repeat the story to him, he noticed that she turned deadly pale. "Strange!" was his comment; but perhaps no danger that he had ever experienced,

even in his life of dangers, could have been as cruelly trying as that half hour to the girl of sixteen.

Unexpected difficulties arose as to Laurette's marriage, she considering a religious as well as a civil rite absolutely necessary, Junot amazed by her considering a priest necessary as well as a magistrate. To himself, it was entirely a matter of indifference, except that he knew Napoleon would be highly displeased if he, the Commandant of Paris, were to make, as it were, an open profession of faith, at a time when religion and the aristocrats were almost one, to the popular mind, and all the satisfaction shown by the public, when churches began to be reopened, had not yet made it safe to attract the attention of the Republicans. Later, when Bonaparte became supreme, he protected religion "from political motives, and because he thought it strengthened his hands," as Bourrienne tells us; "but he would never interfere with any sect, and could not understand how any one should persecute on religious grounds. The sound of church bells always moved him strangely, and though he used to say, "My reason forces me to disbelieve many things," he detested materialism, and once silenced some who were arguing in favour of it, by looking up from the deck of the vessel where they were all standing, and saying, while he pointed to the starry sky, "Very fine talk, gentlemen; but who made all that?" His vague belief, however, never weighed against what seemed most politic, and at the time of Junot's marriage, it decidedly

was *not* politic to make any demonstration in favour of religion.

After much discussion, Junot settled that his marriage should take place very quietly in a church, but late at night. Laurette did not like it; she said that it reminded her of those sad weddings in the Revolution, where the priest gave the blessing, as the bride and bridegroom received it, at the peril of their lives. Persuaded by her mother and brother, however, she yielded. Madame Permon's health gave daily more cause for anxiety, and Albert believed that in Junot he was securing a safe protector for the sister, who was as truly to him as to Madame Permon "the light of his eyes." "Mathia mou" was ever her pet name among them. But her confessor opposed her marriage with all his might. "What reason can General Junot have for refusing to make you his wife in open day?" he asked sternly, when on the eve of her wedding she went to confess to him, accompanied by her old friend, Sœur Rosalie. "There must be some unknown obstacle."

The nun saw Laurette turn pale, and exclaimed, "Why, M. l'Abbé, what obstacle can there be? The good General loves Mademoiselle with all his heart, and marries her to please himself."

Laurette saw the singular look with which he answered. "He loves her . . . yes . . . but who will assure me that he has not first loved another? It seems to me that the relations of this young girl leave her fate to Providence—well, I am the minister of that Pro-

vidence, and it is my duty to watch over this orphan." Laurette broke into the discussion. "I am grateful to you, M. l'Abbé, but I have friend and father in my brother, and he would have known had we been deceived by a man whose high name for honour and truth would then have been strangely ill-deserved. I have already told you why he wishes us to be married so late."

"And that very reason is a sin!" cried the Abbé, holding up his hands, one of which had been hideously mutilated by a Republican soldier. "He would not object to showing himself in St. Sulpice, because it has lost its holy name. I have been a soldier too; I bear its scars; the fields of La Vendée have drunk my blood——" and then with vehement eagerness he went on to express his conviction that Junot had a *first wife* hidden somewhere, from whom he wished to hide Laurette. It was well for him that Laurette was sensible and discreet. She had been grieved by Junot's indifference to any religious ceremony, but she understood his motives, and had entire confidence in him. She was unshaken by the priest's suspicions, which he almost communicated to Sœur Rosalie. This Abbé Lusthier was a fanatic, but one whom it was impossible not to respect. He had almost been a martyr for his convictions, and now slept on ashes, ate only vegetables, and deprived himself of fire that he might give more to the poor, and prayed night and day for France, while he held the Republic and the First Consul in equal horror. Between

him and Junot there would naturally be intense hostility. He positively refused to celebrate the marriage ceremony, and his farewell to Laurette was almost menacing, in spite of its real affection. She never told Junot what had passed; but some years after they met, and the Abbé, at that time poorer than ever, related the whole scene to him. Laurette was alarmed, knowing how easily her husband's fiery temper was roused; but he only smiled, said that he hoped the Abbé now thought better of him, and so thoroughly overcame the good man's prejudices, that they remained fast friends. Junot afterwards procured him an appointment to a rich parish in the diocese of Metz.

The marriage of Laurette naturally brought her in contact with a new world of acquaintances. Instead of the aristocratic friends of her mother, with more or less of a royalist tinge of opinion, she now lived chiefly among the soldier-comrades of her husband: Duroc, Lannes, who was known as the Roland of the army; Bessières, of whom it was said that he lived like Bayard and died like Turenne,* but with whom Junot afterwards quarrelled; Rappe, whose coarse manners must surely have startled the little bride; Marmont, and others. She saw much of Joséphine, though there was a strong aversion between them; and Napoleon's pique against Madame Permon seemed likely at first to be shown towards Laurette, who looked forward with apprehension to appearing before him for the first time as Junot's

* Mémorial de Ste. Hélène.

wife. Bonaparte never showed much courtesy to those whom he disliked, and women often suffered peculiarly from his rudeness. Sometimes a high-spirited aristocrat would retort fearlessly, at the certainty of redoubling his displeasure, for he never could endure to have the tables turned on himself. He had said to the beautiful Duchesse de Chevreuse, before all the Court, "Ah! ah! how red your hair is!" and she replied with emphasis, "Possibly, but no *gentleman* ever told me so before." She was shortly after exiled for having refused an office about the Queen of Spain, but possibly this retort had something to do with her punishment.

Joséphine had bidden Junot present his wife to her after the opera, so that the interview took place at eleven o'clock at night, at the Tuileries. There was a good deal of ceremony about it, though the etiquette of Bonaparte's Court—it was already a court—had all the perplexity and uncertainty of novelty. "There is no real law or ceremonial," Madame Permon said of it, "and yet he already plays the petty king;" a speech which Bonaparte would have thought exile too mild a punishment for, had it come, as most things did, to his ears. With the thoughtful kindness in which Joséphine was never wanting, even towards those against whom she was prejudiced, she sent her son Eugène de Beauharnais to meet the bride, and he led her to the great room, furnished with yellow, and dimly lighted, where sat Joséphine before her embroidery frame, with her fair-haired daughter Hortense beside her, and Bona-

parte standing on the hearth, his hands behind him, and his eyes fixed on the bride, to whom Eugène was whispering, "Do not be afraid; my mother and sister are so kind!" "*Afraid!*" Laurette *had* trembled a little; but at that she felt as fearless as Junot himself in battle. She would not be afraid of even Napoleon, who interrupted Joséphine's graceful reception brusquely, asking if Laurette had not a single kind word for him. He had taken her hand and stared at her, but she answered, with a smile, "General, it is not for me to make the first advances."

His slight frown vanished as he answered, "Well turned. . . . her mother over again. . . . By the way, how is Madame Permon?"

"Very unwell, General. These two years we have been very anxious about her."

"Ah, indeed, so bad as that! I am sorry—very sorry. Give her my kind wishes. Perverse—yes, *une tête de diable;* but she has a heart, and a generous soul."

Was he thinking of Salicetti? Laurette withdrew her hand and sat down, and for a time the conversation became general; but before Laurette took leave, Bonaparte said, suddenly, that he hoped often to see the wives of his generals around him; "but," he added, very sharply, "you will be disappointed if you expect to find your fine friends of the Faubourg St. Germain here. I do not like them. They are my enemies, and show it by calumniating me. Tell them, since your

mother lives in the heart of them, that I have no fear of them—no more than of any one else!"

It was a speech that could not but annoy Junot, and therefore doubly hurt his wife; she could only protest against the opinion which Bonaparte seemed to hold of her mother's friends, and decline to be a messenger of any thing but peace.

This scene, however, was full in Laurette's mind when her mother decided on reviving the old aristocratic custom of a *bal de noce*, on her behalf. Junot and his wife were dining with Madame Permon, who seemed less suffering than usual, and said gaily, "Come, take your old place at the desk, Madame Laurette, and let us two make out the list of guests, for we must ask all your husband's friends."

Junot rose and kissed her hand. "But," she went on, "there really are some who swear *too* much. Laurette says that even you have not a bad notion of it when you are angered. You must cure yourself of this ugly habit—yes! . . ." as Junot laughed and threatened the blushing Laurette, "I hope that, because she is now Madame Junot, she will not cease to trust me, and tell me her joys and sorrows. She did say, too, that you loved her well . . . ."

They sat down to write the list, at the head of which came Joséphine and Hortense; Junot waited for the next name. "First Consul of the French Republic, one and indivisible!—is not that the way you put it?" said Madame Permon.

"The First Consul!" exclaimed her three auditors.

"Why, yes, the First Consul. What surprises you so much? Do you think I am Corsican in keeping up a *vendetta?* It worries me when I dislike people. Besides . . . ."

"Besides, perhaps you think after all that you were the one most in fault?" laughed Junot.

Madame Permon would admit nothing of the kind; but she was well aware, that for Laurette's sake, she must, if possible, revive her old friendship with Napoleon, and she had been gratified by his inquiries for her, which, no doubt, Laurette had made the best of.

"Well," said Junot, delighted at the prospect of a reconciliation between his mother-in-law and his beloved general, "tell me what hour will suit you, and I will come and fetch you."

"Fetch me? Where am I to go?"

"Why," replied Junot, in equal astonishment, "to go to the Tuileries to invite the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte."

"My dear Junot," said Madame Permon, serenely, "you are quite and entirely crazy." Junot disclaimed this impeachment; and Madame Permon proceeded to explain that, since there had been a coolness between her and Bonaparte, he might wish to decline her invitation, and that he could do so more easily were it written than verbal. She should send him an invitation, like everybody else, only she would write it herself. Junot walked up and down, almost speechless with conster-

nation at this cavalier way of treating the man who, in his eyes, was incomparably the greatest hero in the world. Madame Permon continued, "And he will come and pay me a visit, or leave a card."

"A card!" stammered Junot. "Do you suppose he has visiting cards?"

"Why not, pray?" answered Madame Permon, to whom Napoleon was still the boy whom she had shown kindness to for his mother's sake. "My dear Junot, do you suppose that Bonaparte is not to pay visits because he has gained some battles?"

It was too absurd; the contrast of the views held by Junot and Madame Permon, his utter amazement and her calm superiority, overcame both Albert and Laurette, and both laughed with all their hearts. But Junot's dismay soon affected Laurette, and made her remember that, whatever Madame Permon thought, Bonaparte was all-powerful; and, knowing that there was nothing more useless than to argue with Madame Permon, by common consent the subject was waived; and no one told her that the invitation in question was given, in due form, by Junot, his wife, and Albert in person. Bonaparte accepted, pulling the hair and pinching the ear of Laurette as he did so, till the tears came into her eyes!

Laurette would have thoroughly enjoyed the prospect of a ball, had it not been for the stately minuet which, as the bride, she was expected to dance. Vainly she implored her mother to excuse this exhibition; Madame

Permon was inexorable. Did not people sometimes dance *seven* at their own wedding balls in the good old times? It was to be; and for three weeks Laurette had to take lessons in dancing the minuet from the well-known master, Gardel. She begged M. de Trénis (from whom a figure in the quadrille was named) to be her partner in this exhibition; and awaited the day with almost equal fear lest it should be a failure, or Bonaparte and Madame Permon clash. The evening came: Madame Permon arrived; Joséphine dressed, as usual, to perfection; Pauline out of humour at the sight of her exquisite toilette. "How can people who are forty years old wear flowers?" she muttered to Laurette, looking at the wreaths of corn and poppies which crowned Joséphine's hair, and looped up her dress. Laurette, much afraid lest she should make the same observation in Madame Permon's hearing, observed, "My mother wears flowers too, and she is older . . ." "That is quite another thing," said Pauline, who could not fear a rival in Madame Permon. Bonaparte came in late, with his inevitable grey great-coat; he met Madame Permon cordially, but his face darkened; he perceived that some of the ladies present had not risen at his entrance, and this was exactly the thing to ruffle his vanity. There was a low murmur of talk; the dancing ceased when he came in. He wished it to continue, and the moment for the minuet came. But where was M. de Trénis? Not come. Laurette hoped for an instant that she should escape; but no, Madame Permon found

another partner for her; the music struck up, Gardel and all the guests looked on, and Laurette only breathed freely when the dance was over. But as she returned to her seat, she encountered M. de Trénis, who looked at her with so fierce an air that she hastened to excuse herself by explaining how long she had waited for him.

"Of course," he replied, seating himself beside her,—"of course I have philosophy enough to console myself for not having danced the *epithalamium* of Madame Junot, yet there were laurels to be gathered in that minuet. I should have danced it thoughtfully, seriously, but by no means sadly. Yes, I should have liked it. But to see what I saw . . . Never shall I forget that sight."

Laurette knew well that he chose to appear nothing but a perfect dancer, and wilfully concealed much sense and wit under this reputation. "What did I do?" she asked.

"Do!" he answered tragically: "you, who dance so well, that we are all charmed to have you as a partner . . . you, who studied your minuet with Gardel, and who have made him famous by your courtesy . . . you . . . I cannot utter it! You danced with a man—a good dancer, undoubtedly; yes, he does dance well, although . . . But even if he can manage a country dance, he has never, never, known how to make the deep bow with a hat."

Laurette and the young friend beside her burst out laughing, but M. de Trénis continued his lecture with melancholy earnestness, led them to a room where there

happened to be but few people, and, standing before a mirror, took his three-cornered cocked-hat, and, while he hummed the air of a minuet, bowed to himself like another Narcissus. A little group collected, stifling their laughter; Bonaparte came behind them unseen, and heard M. de Trénis holding forth to Junot on the merits of his own dancing. "Prodigious!" muttered Bonaparte, as Dominie Sampson might have done. "He is much madder than most men in a lunatic asylum!" And he went away to discuss this phenomenon with M. de Talleyrand.

The next year was full of excitement, both domestic and public. The emigrés flocked back to France, and the English began to visit Paris,—

> "To bend the knee
> In France, before the new-born Majesty,"*

and wonder and be wondered at. Two of Laurette's Comneni uncles returned, and their known royalist opinions much annoyed Bonaparte, who said "she welcomed his enemies." Junot bought a small estate in the green little valley of Bièvre, which had belonged to M. de Chamilly, one of Louis XVI.'s valets de chambre, and Laurette delighted in this new possession. "The thought of it recalls that of many springtides," she used fondly to quote in after years, when it was hers no more. Madame Permon's life was drawing to a close; it ended in such pain that those who loved her

* Wordsworth.

were thankful for her release, and repeated, "she suffers no more;" but when Laurette first went to Bièvre, and amused herself by refurnishing it in the last fashion, Madame Permon seemed unusually well, and enjoyed the *vie de château* as much as her daughter. It was perhaps the happiest time of Laurette's life. Junot was as yet entirely devoted to her; Madame Permon lived under her roof; she was free for the time from the perplexities and *tracasseries* of her Paris life, for the Tuileries were out of sight and hearing, and she hoped soon to have a son.

The infant arrived, and the mother survived a dangerous confinement, but it was a girl, and the displeasure of its grandfather, old M. Junot, on hearing it was but a "méchante fille," so seriously grieved Laurette in her weak condition, that her doctor was much alarmed, and began to caution the father, who had been hastily summoned back from the Tuileries, not to show any disappointment. But the caution was needless; Junot snatched up the baby and kissed it as he laid it in the young mother's arms. She was but seventeen years old. The child was not christened for some months, and had the honour of being the first goddaughter of Napoleon, receiving the name of Joséphine.

Bonaparte had now fixed his residence at St. Cloud, and thither, at length, Laurette was summoned to bring her child, now fifteen months old, to be baptized with the little son of General Lannes, by Cardinal Caprara, whose features are familiar to us from David's fine por-

trait of him in the "Distribution des aigles" at Versailles. At this time the Pope had sent him to France as legate *a latere;* a few years later he was destined to consecrate Bonaparte as King of Italy.

The ceremony took place in the chapel, and the little son of General Lannes behaved with baby dignity; but not so the daughter of Junot. All was strange to the poor child; the light, the clergy, the service, combined to terrify her; she turned from Napoleon and hid her fair head on her mother's neck, but made no sound, and while Madame Junot was hoping that all would pass quietly, Cardinal Caprara issued from the sacristy splendid in his scarlet robes and cap, which surmounted a peculiarly aged and ugly face. This was too much; the little one looking up espied him suddenly, opened her large blue eyes wide, trembled, and turned pale. At this inauspicious moment the First Consul attempted to take his god-daughter into his arms, on which she uttered a shrill cry, clung round her mother's neck, and looked more in wrath even than terror at Napoleon.

"What a little devil! Do you mean to come, or not, Mademoiselle Demon?" he asked. "I won't!" was her answer, its baby lispings fully explained by her gesture.

He laughed and told her mother to hold her towards the Cardinal herself. So held, the child seemed to fear nothing, and gazed at the Cardinal, as if he had been a sight brought there expressly to amuse her. His red *barrette* especially attracted her attention, and she was so absorbed by it, that she let Napoleon take and kiss

her several times without doing worse than rub her cheek with her dimpled hand after each embrace. All at once, when least it might have been expected, she put out her arm, snatched the cap from the head of His Eminence, and uttered a cry of triumph which echoed through the château. There was general confusion and amusement. The little Joséphine alone preserved her composure, and proceeded to put the *barrette* on her own head. Bonaparte interfered: "No, no, my child, that must not be," he said; "give me this plaything—a toy, truly, like many other things—and let us restore it to the Cardinal."

Thereupon the little maiden screamed, until Bonaparte exclaimed, "The child is possessed; she has a voice as loud as any boy's in France, but she is very pretty—very!" And he added to Junot, "She is my god-daughter, nay, my daughter; you know that, Junot."

He pressed Junot's hand, a sign of friendship not common with him. Junot's eyes grew moist, and he answered, "My general, I and mine have long owed you everything, and so will my children, and, like their parents, they will be yours, body and soul."

This little Joséphine afterwards became a nun.

Laurette's fortunes rose and fell with those of Junot, who became Duc d'Abrantès, ambassador to Portugal, and Governor of the Illyrian provinces, a type, in fact, of the noblesse created by Bonaparte. Whatever her titles, she was of course always looked down on by the Faubourg St. Germain, as merely a *Dame anoblie,*

ennobled too by their *bête noire*, the Emperor. Junot's sad end, and her own extravagance, darkened the later years of her life, and she was once heard to exclaim, "How pleasant night is, one need then to fear neither debts nor creditors!"

Her history is chronicled in her long and amusing memoirs, from which the present sketch has been in a great measure taken, as giving a more vivid picture than any history or even romance could do of that strange period, when the Bonapartes were rising to the height of their short-lived glory, and of what a girl's life might be in the First French Revolution.

"On ne rève pas, comme elle a vécu."*

* La Bruyère.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

"There is a history in these men's lives;
Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
The which observing, a man may prophesy
With a near aim of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life."

SHAKSPEARE.

THERE was one class in France which might have seemed tolerably safe when the tempest of revolution swept over the land, namely, owners of small properties, who were kind to their tenants and labourers, and popular with their equals, men of little mark, and not rich enough to awaken the covetousness of their neighbours. But every man has some one poorer than himself, if he possesses anything at all, and this class suffered as much as any. What it underwent is vividly told in the charming memoirs of Alexandrine des Écherolles,* written for a niece whom she had brought up, and dedicated to the noble pupils whose governess she became, while, as years go, scarcely out of her own childhood, but in sad experiences older than many who reached fourscore.

* "Quelques Années de ma Vie."

The Des Écherolles were a good family of the Bourbonnais, with a small estate, and an old manor house, large out-buildings, and a shady garden, with turf, and flowers, and trees, and a view only bounded by the rugged peaks of Auvergne. The nearest town was Moulins, once the capital of the Bourbonnais, and with still one tower left of the old ducal palace, to tell of past importance. It had some associations, too, of which historians thought more than the inhabitants, to whom their trade in cutlery is much dearer; there Jeanne d'Albret married her worthless husband, Antoine de Bourbon, and there Catherine de Medicis convoked the famous assembly which was to compose the fierce dissensions of the Calvinists and Lutherans, and ended in the war of the League; and there, too, Henri Quatre made a triumphant entry. From that time little of political importance took place in Moulins, but it had an unenviable notoriety for fires and pestilence; otherwise nothing disturbed the dull quiet of its straight streets, and gloomy brick houses, until the air grew electric with revolution. Écherolles was called a château, but it hardly deserved the name. It was rather a solid, picturesque manor house. Alexandrine's grandfather had dwelt there but little, for he lived in stirring times, and was a man of war; and when he returned from the camp immediately organized a hunt for wolves or wild boars, to rest himself, as he said, and left his property and his money to the care of his wife, a sensible, grave woman, who often found it hard to

make their income suffice for his needs, and perhaps would fain have kept her little son of nine years old beside her, instead of letting him go with his father to the army. M. des Écherolles had a dozen or more little nephews and cousins of about the same age under his charge, and brought them up to be good soldiers. One of them used, as an elderly man, to speak with great pleasure of those days, and with much esteem of his commander. "We used to fight well," he would say to Alexandrine, "and we feared nothing. Your grandfather loved us like his own children, but he kept us at it. I owe him much—yes, I owe him this leg of mine. It was smashed by a ball, and the surgeon wanted to have it off; for they use sharp measures in war time. 'No,' said your grandfather, 'I answer for that leg.' And here it is!"

At twelve years old the little Des Écherolles was wounded on the cheek and taken prisoner; he received six wounds at different times after this, and very early won the cross of St. Louis, but he was never so proud of any honour as of that first scar, when, having been exchanged for another prisoner, he returned home. For some years of his manhood he lived at Écherolles, with an excellent sister, who refused all offers of marriage that she might live with him, and only left him on his marriage with an orphan girl who had spent her childhood as a boarder in a Paris convent. Then she wisely retired to Moulins, where her fortune secured her an independent position, and she lived a sociable and

cheerful life, very popular, and near her brother, far more popular than ever was the shy and silent wife who had replaced her at the château, and cared for nothing beyond its walls. Four children were born of this marriage, two boys and two girls, the younger of whom was an abiding sorrow to her mother, for from infancy she had been an idiot, suffering great pain, and wailing incessantly. The other daughter was Alexandrine. Of the sons, the eldest, Martial, followed his father's career, and at thirteen was already a cavalry officer. In the case of M. des Écherolles, his education had suffered severely from his early removal to the army, but there were advantages in the severe life and strict discipline. It was different in more peaceful times. Boys of thirteen considered themselves men ; they learned nothing, and their garrison life was idle, and full of temptations. But the army or the church were the natural outlets for boys of good family. Both the lads were at home when sudden illness seized their mother, and her children never forgot how she called them to her bedside, and bade them be good to the poor idiot Odille. It was her express desire that her funeral should be as simple as possible, such money as would otherwise be spent on it being given to the poor. And so she died, calmly, gently, as she had lived, leaving Alexandrine to regret her passionately and inconsolably.

The first experience of a great grief in a young and happy life is always critical. Alexandrine little guessed then how thankful she should be for the mercy which

spared her mother the evil to come, and as little how dear the aunt would be whom she at first could hardly endure to see in that mother's place. Mademoiselle des Écherolles at once returned to her brother, and devoted herself to cheering the desolate family; but it was soon settled that they should leave the château and live at Moulins, that Martial might be under their roof. The younger brother, Chambolle, was sent to a military school at Metz, and Alexandrine urgently implored that she might be placed in a convent. It was not that she disliked the kind aunt, who was wrapped up in her, and never wearied of devising pleasures and amusements for her, but she knew that almost the last wish that her mother had expressed was that Alexandrine, like herself, should receive a conventual education. Unhappy, and uprooted from her old home, the girl harped on this with pertinacity which later she could not bear to recal. Neither father nor aunt would part with her. "I cannot spare you; am not I now your mother?" Mademoiselle des Écherolles would say, and Alexandrine winced indignantly at the fond, unskilful touch on the wound which was so sensitive, and looked on her aunt's gifts and attempts to please her as so many bribes. Every visit to her young friends in the convent of Moulins sent her back sad and discontented, longing for the instruction which they had, and envying the good-conduct rosettes which some wore on their shoulders. "I wish I were in a convent! I shall never be happy anywhere else!" she would repeat, and brood over it when she accompanied her aunt to

pay visits, which were so dull to her, as she sat silent and upright, that she was often reduced to counting the flowers on the carpet to pass the long moments. She had her mother's ornaments, and was always beautifully dressed, child as she was; her friends were constantly invited, but still there was the drooping sullenness, the indifference, which made her aunt ask wistfully, "What is it, my child? What do you want more?" "The convent," was the reply, and Mademoiselle des Écherolles was vanquished; she decided to quit Moulins, give up her pleasant life there, and board in a Paris convent, where Alexandrine would accompany her. With that imperceptiveness which children have, seeing nothing but what is straight before their eyes, the niece accepted the plan, was satisfied, and not till long after discovered that it was entirely for her sake that Mademoiselle des Écherolles had intended to abandon all that was most agreeable to her, and submit to the discomforts of a monastic rule. But the scheme was put an end to by the dangers and perplexities which thickened around the Des Écherolles.

There was a delightful excitement in the first signs of danger to a good many, who did not realize what the distant roll of thunder and gathering clouds portended. In the dull Court life they awoke a new interest; in country houses they were discussed doubtfully; in nurseries the children listened eagerly to the servants' gossip. A rumour reached Moulins that a troop of brigands had sprung up, nobody knew from whence,

and was advancing to burn the town. Peasants flocked in, armed with scythes and hay-forks, demanding to be led against them, and every hour brought some fresh report of the robbers; they had been seen; they were coming; they were come; and though they never came in reality, and their very existence remained problematical, a National Guard was hastily formed to protect the town, and the command of it was offered to M. des Écherolles, as a military man of experience. His sister was one of the very few who read the signs of the times; she implored him with tears to decline the dangerous honour, but patriotism spoke louder, and he became Colonel of the Garde Nationale, and, as it were, public property. Alexandrine wondered why her aunt wept to hear the crowd applaud him, and took no pleasure in the guard of honour at their door, but that was the only token which Mademoiselle des Écherolles gave of the fears which possessed her. Thenceforward she was always brave and cheerful, and would not allow the insecurity and terror which gradually pervaded everything to interfere with the usual course of daily life. Colonel des Écherolles' new duties occupied him entirely, but Alexandrine had masters for languages and music as before, and her aunt went out much into society, well aware that to withdraw from it would be interpreted into a want of patriotism very dangerous for the whole family. Throughout France this panic terror of brigands prevailed, and gave an excuse for the formation of the so-called comités de surveillance, and the

National Guard, both paralyzing regular authority. Like all the other towns of France, Moulins sent a deputation to Paris, and selected M. des Écherolles as chief speaker. This gave him the opportunity of studying politics at the fountain head, and when he returned it was to tell his sister that he despaired of France. "Had the King only put himself at the head of his troops and dissolved the Assembly on the day of the Champ de Mars, it would have saved the country," he said; "but he knew not how to use the enthusiasm still felt for him." Later events made it doubtful whether anything that Louis Seize could have done would have arrested the torrent which flowed so fast and strong. Scarcity increased the popular discontent; bread grew scarce and dear, and the usual murmurs against those suspected of holding back wheat arose. In a sudden tumult a rich corn merchant of the name of Noailly was arrested as "un affameur du peuple," bound, gagged, and half murdered before M. des Écherolles could hurry to the spot, with some of his troops, and drag him into his carriage, under the pretext of conveying him to prison. In a moment the carriage was broken to pieces by the furious crowd, who could hardly be induced to listen to the Colonel's assurances that M. Noailly should be judged with the utmost rigour of the law, and surged wildly round the two men, as M. des Écherolles stood holding his prisoner by the collar, and tried to obtain a hearing. Step by step they edged their way on, amid insults and threats, the mob seeming

quite as ready to murder the Colonel as the prisoner, and the troops as usual ready to side with them ; step by step, until the prison was reached, the corn-merchant inside its walls, half dead already, and a double guard at the doors to keep back the people, who slowly withdrew, muttering threats and scowling on the Colonel. Through his influence M. Noailly was secretly released in the night, and public proclamation was made that he had been arrested by mistake, his innocence being fully proved. The populace never forgave M. des Écherolles for having saved their victim ; his short-lived popularity vanished, and he was a marked man from that time. Feeling that he could be of no more service to Moulins, he resigned his colonelship, and hoped to escape into private life, but the hatred and suspicion with which he was regarded was proved by the absurd calumnies to which every day gave birth against him. Now he was declared to have hidden cannon in the thick hedges of a garden bordering the public promenade, with intent to fire on the people ; next, his house was said to be filled with arms and iron hooks to hang patriots to ; then the report arose that he had placed a mine under the Cathedral in order to blow it up at a midnight mass, and so strong was the popular belief that the Des Écherolles thought it necessary to appear at this service to disprove it. He laughed contemptuously at all these rumours, and would not listen when his sister urged him to fly, but he sent his sons out of France, and this was an additional and very serious crime.

Amid all this anxiety and alarm Alexandrine went to her first communion, on a Friday in Holy Week, 1792. She was very young, but her mother's confessor, the Abbé Ripond, urged that though she was but a child of eleven years old, and, as her aunt thought, not prepared for the solemn rite, they must trust to such instruction as she had had. "Misfortune will do the rest," he said, sighing. "Evil days approach, and she must receive the Sacrament which gives strength. Soon, perhaps, I shall no longer be able to call her to the altar where her God awaits her; soon sheep and shepherd will be scattered; temples profaned or destroyed: desolation is about to be poured out on us."

Already, in fact, several churches served by priests who would not take the oath now demanded by the Government had been closed. In others mass was said secretly at dawn. The Bishop of Moulins had assured his safety by a hasty flight to Rome, and his place was occupied by an "intrus," who wore the bonnet rouge instead of a mitre, and showed little favour to priests who would rather have received the crown of martyrdom. Moulins was daily losing its best citizens; those who remained, unless on the popular side, sought to be as little seen or noticed as possible. There were none of the sweet and solemn preparations for Alexandrine's first communion which would have naturally taken place at another time. Alone, at daybreak, she stole trembling to church, as did several other girls; terror lest they should be observed and ill-used by the populace, or

bring suspicion on their families, mingling painfully with higher feelings. Although Alexandrine was not noticed, new accusations sprang up perpetually around her father, whose hasty temper had raised up as many enemies as his suspected want of patriotism, and a mandate of arrest was passed against him. Imprisonment had not yet become glorious, as it soon did, and the soldier's spirit revolted against it. Neither his sister nor child could soothe him, or hush the imprudent exclamations which burst from him when he learnt his fate. "I in prison!" he exclaimed, walking hurriedly up and down the room; "I, who am covered with glorious wounds! —I, who never once was under arrest!—I disgraced by imprisonment!"

It was a severe imprisonment, moreover. A faithful servant besought leave to follow his master, and being told that he could only do so as a captive, gave himself up to share the fate of M. des Écherolles, who sorely needed this comfort, for he fell seriously ill, and a doctor was refused him. He was kept *au secret*, and when orders came for his transfer to the Minorite Church, now used as a Salle de Justice, he was brought down almost too feeble to stand, chained to two men, supposed to be his accomplices in the various crimes with which he stood charged. There had, as yet, been no trial; it was simply on suspicion that he was thus treated, and all his friends saw that his destruction was resolved on. As yet terror had not produced the mute paralysis which it did a little later, and friends rallied round

Mdlle. des Écherolles, especially women, eagerly expressing their sympathy, but none had influence enough to support her anxious request, that he might be carried to the Minorite, since he must traverse great part of the town, and was too ill to dress, almost too ill to stand. The jailor himself had pity on his prisoner, gave him hot wine, and put him into a *chaise à porteurs*, but the expectant crowd were indignant at being cheated of one pleasure they expected in seeing him pass on foot, and the imprecations and shouts of "Let him get down! let him walk!" grew so violent that he was forced to alight, and stagger on between his fellow captives, to the great joy of the surging throng. The so-called Salle de Justice was crowded by the mob, and during the interrogatory of the accused, the soldiers were constantly obliged to point their guns and threaten to shoot as the only means of obtaining silence, or saving the prisoners from being massacred. M. des Écherolle's feeble voice was inaudible, happily for him, for had his bold and independent answers reached the audience, he would have been murdered where he stood. Of his judges some were his personal enemies, some friendly, some afraid to protect him, though they were well aware of his innocence. Fortunately the greffier, whose business it was to write down his replies, was kindly disposed towards him, and wrote whatever he thought most likely to be in his favour. While the trial went on, the Des Écherolles were in dreadful anxiety, shared by a cousin who had come to stay with

them before the arrest, expecting as usual a pleasant visit. Friends went backwards and forwards from the church to Mdlle. des Écherolles, with such news as they could gather. It was a more favourable result than they dared expect, when the prisoner was only sent back to captivity, and permitted to see his family. They found him in a large airy room, listening to the consolations of an Abbé, who was in prison for having received and circulated a brief of the Pope's. The guillotine released him a few months later. Happily for M. des Echerolles, the jailor was a kind-hearted man, who spared him all the discomforts which he could; but the corridor, into which his room looked, was intolerably fetid; and the infirmary, crowded with sick people, bore witness to the unhealthiness of the prison. There seemed a disposition at this time to show kindness to M. des Écherolles, and the municipal officers came daily to inquire if he had anything to complain of. "Only of being here!" he would indignantly answer, walking up and down without so much as a glance at them, to the great terror of his family, and he soon felt the consequences of being unable to court his enemies, for his captivity became stricter; visits from the friends who had filled his room were forbidden, and only one person was permitted to see him daily. With her rare unselfishness Mdlle. des Écherolles denied herself the joy of being with him, and sent Alexandrine instead. She entered the prison at seven in the morning, and by and by it appeared that the sentinel and jailor charitably shut

their eyes to her presence, and made no objection to her aunt's entering about noon, so that they could dine together. This was a sad life for a child so young, and for a long time to come prisons were to be her habitual resort, too thankful if she were within instead of without their walls. Of an evening there was the return home, where the wailing cries of Odille alone broke the stillness. She scarcely knew those around her, and knew nothing of what was passing. Her malady made her a constant care to the kind aunt. Happily, an old nurse was devoted to her, and remained faithful in these crucial times, when servants became the worst enemies of their masters, knowing their secrets, aware of the hiding-places where plate and other valuables were concealed, and eager to prove their patriotism by denouncing their superiors. The Des Écherolles were sorely troubled by the conduct of one to whom they had shown peculiar kindness, and who had lived with them for many years. This Saapa, as he was called, had a singular history, which no doubt embittered him against the world at large, and those of good family in particular. He was the son of a Venetian noble, who married far beneath himself, was disowned by his family, and died or disappeared. Two children by this marriage had been placed under the care of persons apparently trustworthy. No sooner had the father gone than they appropriated the large sum left for their maintenance, and sent the boys to feed pigs. They both became soldiers, Saapa making his first

campaign under the grandfather of Alexandrine, who kept him as his servant, and the whole family always treated him almost as an equal. In this time of need he suddenly left them, paraded republican sentiments, looked another way if he met any of them, and declared that he had fled from the contagion of aristocrats. It cost M. des Écherolles much pain. Alexandrine, too, began to suffer personally from the revolution, for her favourite friend was forbidden to visit her, nor was she or her aunt admitted into houses where formerly they were eagerly welcomed. It was her first experience that the unfortunate have few friends.

There was some talk of sending M. des Écherolles to Orleans, then full of prisoners, who were all finally taken to Versailles, where they perished in the fatal massacre in the Orangerie. Mademoiselle des Écherolles, far-sighted as usual, used every possible means to prevent his transfer, and he was allowed to remain. Up to this time she had passed for a gay-spirited, witty woman, popular in society, but making enemies through her incapacity to resist saying anything amusing which came into her head; but now the deep and unselfish devotion, the admirable good sense of her character, showed itself, and Alexandrine rewarded her in the way that no doubt was sweetest to her, by a true and ever-growing affection. The whole family were now living on her means, as M. des Écherolles' income was confiscated. Society, amusement, everything that she formerly enjoyed, was exchanged for constant anxiety,

actual and increasing danger, and the care of young children. Yet she was as gay, as agreeable as ever; and the anxious and the unhappy will know what self-denial and self-command it implies to be agreeable under such circumstances. Already she saw poverty and exile, perhaps death, for she placed a sum of money in the surest keeping that she could, saying to the friend to whom she confided it, that it was intended for the first of the family who came back in need to Moulins.

Alexandrine's education must have come entirely to a standstill but for a fellow-prisoner of her father's, who gladly passed some of the weary hours in teaching her. He had a small electrical machine, which he liked to show, and she to see; but a sudden end was put to this amusement. The weather was very hot, and in a thunder-storm a man who had denounced M. des Écherolles was killed by lightning. This was quite enough to spread a report that the electrical machine was constructed to destroy Moulins in general, and the enemies of M. des Echerolles in particular. It was carried off; the dead patriot was honoured with a public funeral, and celebrated as a martyr; and when M. des Écherolles from his prison window threw some of the few coins in his possession to the wretched beggars who sat below, these very people denounced him as having bribed them to injure the commonwealth. It became very hard for the Des Écherolles to think charitably of their fellow creatures.

The prison was full of peasants, apprehended for

having insulted their mayor, and dragged his bench out of church. "Dame!" said they, "he burned our good seigneur's bench, and now wants one himself!" "Je n'avons pas voulu que la mairesse se quarre dans l'église comme une dame," said one, in expressive and untranslatable patois, "alle peut faire comme nous!" which indeed seemed fair enough.

The time for M. des Écherolles' case to be decided was at hand, and anxiety was poignant, for on every side public news was alarming, and justice was more than uncertain. One August evening he and his little daughter were sadly and silently watching the sunset, when the jailor entered, in great emotion. He sat down, holding out a paper, and in the dusk they could not tell whether his face expressed joy or grief. "What is that paper?" asked the prisoner.

"You are free, sir, you are free!" was the glad answer. M. des Écherolles clasped him in his arms, thanked God, and then warmly expressed his gratitude to the kind man who had done all he could to render captivity bearable, took leave of his companions in misfortune, and went home. He owed his liberation to two kind friends, one of whom, the President of the Tribunal, had pleaded earnestly and fearlessly for him. A storm broke wildly over the Salle de Justice as he spoke, and his eloquent appeal to the God, whose voice they heard above them for the righteousness of his cause, so struck and awed the assembly, that they released their prisoner unanimously. He was safe for

the moment, but they all knew it was only for the moment. The two months of her father's imprisonment had changed Alexandrine greatly; her childishness was gone, her natural love of play and amusement seemed crushed, and that blessed security which is the happiness of childhood had vanished for ever.

Although acquitted, M. des Écherolles was ordered to leave Moulins in three days. His release was highly unpopular, and a double guard was necessary to protect his house. Threats were made of seizing him, and burning his château. In this dilemma, when to go or to stay was equally difficult, one of his farmers contrived to offer to convey him out of the city, if he could only once get him safely into his *patache*, a sort of little cart without springs. M. des Écherolles contrived to leave his house unseen in the darkness, and found the burly farmer, in a vast great coat, apparently filling up the whole *patache*, but he made room for the fugitive, threw a mantle over him, and drove unnoticed to the house of that Noailly who owed his life to M. des Écherolles, and to whom M. des Écherolles owed his unpopularity. Unlike many, he did not forget his debt of gratitude; he offered to conceal him, but on every account it was desirable to hurry on, at least as far as Roanne, where M. des Écherolles was forced to wait for some days until some important papers could be secured and sent him. His family joined him there. Public excitement increased hourly; all sorts of reports were circulated; blood had been shed in Paris, and the

earth seemed to burn under the fugitives' feet; the storm growled over their heads. A stream of refugees was flowing through Roanne—many old friends and relations of the Des Écherolles among them. One of these was a lady disguised as a nurse, carrying her twin children on a cushion—a touching sight, which served her better than any passport. But the question was, where to fly? Everywhere was the same oppressive sense of danger—vague, terrible, phantom-like, and all the more terrible from its vagueness. Several officers came to consult M. des Écherolles; past and future misfortunes occupied every mind; many regiments had murdered their officers, and these feared the same fate. "These new notions undermine everything," they said; "obedience exists no longer; we have no refuge but Coblentz."

The dreadful 10th of August came; Alexandrine saw the diligence stop at Roanne with a man on the box, evidently a furious Jacobin, who stood up, foaming with excitement as he addressed the crowd which gathered round. "Brothers and friends," he shouted, "you have destroyed the infamous Bastille, but you have only cast down walls. A nobler task awaits you. Throw down heads, and you will be free! Down with Kings! death to the tyrant! Long live the People! long live Liberty!"

He was still haranguing when the diligence started again. Such a scene made M. des Écherolles feel that he must go where he was less known. The great number of fugitives who seemed to have found a refuge

at Lyons, and its neighbourhood to the frontier, made him resolve to go there. It was impossible to take Odille on a difficult journey, when it was essential to escape observation, and she was left at Écherolles with her nurse. All this time no news had come of the absent boys, wandering and living no one knew where or how. All ties seemed snapped by the strain upon them; friendships died out, or were rent asunder; relations drifted away and met no more. Communications became increasingly difficult and dangerous. Even the short journey to Lyons was full of peril, and when the Des Écherolles arrived, the necessary permission to remain there was roughly refused. They could not see where they were to go, for to ask a passport for another country would have been demanding a death warrant. Even in the hôtels, fugitive seemed written on their faces, to judge by the distrust shown them. While hesitating whither to turn, M. des Écherolles thought he would get rid of an hour or two by showing Alexandrine the theatre. The play of "Paul et Virginie" was being admirably acted, and Alexandrine, absorbed in the performance, had forgotten all her troubles, when all at once stentorian voices in the pit raised the Marseillaise. The theatre was full of Marseillais on their way to Paris, ready for any ferocity. Alexandrine and her father returned home shuddering, only to see a great crowd pass by, joyous and cruel, escorting a party of officers accused of inciting their soldiers to emigrate. The furious torrent flowed past; its yells and shouts died

away, but still none of the Des Écherolles could speak; cold and pale with dismay, they looked at each other, recalling in silence the brave, helpless group of captives, and the savage crowd around them. Every day, every minute, revealed a danger. Life became a burden, because there was no security that the next moment it might not cease to exist.

The son of M. Noailly lived in Lyons, and came to the assistance of the poor wanderers, advising them to settle in one of the quietest parts, and answering for them as good patriots. It was no small act of kindness. They found lodgings, furnished them in haste, and took possession of them as soon as possible, anxious to escape the dangerous attention directed to new-comers. A perplexing letter reached them, shortly after they were established there, from the Marquis de Piolenc, whose daughters were friends of Alexandrine's, and had been educated in the convent at Moulins, which was now closed. Their father had no means of seeking them, except at the risk of being arrested, and wrote to M. des Écherolles, whom he supposed to be at Moulins, imploring him to shelter them for a time. It was a far greater risk for him to attract notice and betray his place of refuge than even for the Marquis to appear and claim them, but he sent for them, to Alexandrine's great joy, and for a few days she felt a child again as they played and chattered together, fancying themselves in a haven of safety. The dream was promptly dispelled. While the girls were skipping in

the large shady garden backed by rising cliffs, they were startled by horrible cries; they stood aghast to listen; a deep roar of voices, mingled with piercing shrieks, followed. M. des Écherolles rushed down into the garden, and climbed the rocks, to gain a view of what was passing, while the children stood panic-struck below, gazing up to try to guess by his face what he saw. He descended, almost speechless with horror. A vast crowd was besieging the state prison of Bellecise, where the unhappy officers whom he had seen led by on his arrival in Lyons were in captivity.

The Governor was a feeble old man. Hearing the uproar, he became helpless with terror, and would neither appear nor defend his charges. His wife, expecting, like himself, instant death, hastened to his side, consoling and soothing him, while the brave young daughter took his place. She stood forth alone before the raging crowd, and with a clear steady voice declared that she would give up the keys to none who had not a legal right to demand them. There was a deep silence of astonishment. The Mayor came forward as the representative of public authority. She held the heavy bunch of keys out to him: his hand was less steady than hers, and they fell; she picked them up, and gave them to him, bidding him remember that it was his duty to protect the prisoners. She spoke in vain. He opened the doors; she flung herself before them; a ruffian struck his pike through her foot; she hastily tied her handkerchief round it, and rushed into the thickest of the crowd,

imploring mercy for the prisoners. The throng rushed into the prison, regardless of the single voice uplifted to stay them, and a soldier dashed her aside, striking her in the side with his fist. Bellecise was sacked from top to bottom; the very steps were drenched with blood; little but the walls was left by nightfall, and few indeed remained alive within them, except the Governor and his family, who escaped inexplicably. He had cowered and shrunk throughout all that long day, expecting the death which did not come, while his young daughter risked her life a hundred times in vain. They left Bellecise under cover of night, stealing down the crimsoned steps, and hearing the roar of savage voices afar, for the crowd had gone elsewhere in search of fresh victims, but might return at any moment. There was a carriage awaiting them in the darkness at the foot of the steep rock on which the castle was built, but it had scarcely moved before a patrol stopped it, demanding who was there. The venerable wife of the Governor looked out, and told her name. She was respected by all in Lyons, of whatever opinions they might be, and the officer in command bowed deeply, and repeated it to his companions. "Let her pass," was the response from all. They did not guess that in the carriage sat also the single prisoner who had escaped in the massacre—escaped by throwing himself from a window into a court below, where a madman was in captivity. There was a sewer in the court, with a trap-door; as if a gleam of reason had visited the poor lunatic, he lifted

it up, signed to the officer to crouch within, and dropped it above him. When the crowd rushed into the court they only saw a madman, singing and dancing round it. The officer remained hidden until silence and darkness offered a hope of escape, slender enough, and, passing through countless perils, got safely out of Lyons.

The next day, Félicité de Bellecise, though suffering from the brutal blows which left her an invalid for years after, went boldly to the Hôtel de Ville, where Challier was sitting, and claiming the protection of the city, demanded to have her father's pillaged property recovered, and permission granted to fetch away whatever was left in the fortress. A guard was sent with her. She had to pass through the crowd in the square, still madly exulting over their bloody deeds, as she returned to the scene of slaughter. No one openly insulted the dauntless girl, but she had to walk past the dead maimed bodies lying on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. Such poor articles as the mob had overlooked she recovered, and some of hers were afterwards brought back by the police. Such times as these would be too painful to dwell on were it not for the brave deeds which shine through them. The Des Écherolles were personally endangered by an accidental connection with the unfortunate victims of that night. It chanced that their colonel had not been arrested; his hiding-place was unknown, but he had been lodging in the house where were now M. des Écherolles and his family, and it was terribly likely that the mob would seek him there, and

take vengeance for his absence on those whom they found. While M. des Écherolles was reflecting in the utmost anxiety on this danger, and walking up and down, as was his habit when in troubled thought, the door suddenly opened, and a woman entered, her dress disordered, her voice almost choked with tears. She was the wife of the traiteur who had supplied provisions to the prisoners of Bellecise, and had witnessed the frightful scenes of murder on the previous day. Even yet she seemed bewildered with horror. M. des Écherolles questioned her as to why she had come to him at such an hour, and learned that it was with the hope of saving M. de la Barre, the colonel who was just then occupying so large a part of his own thoughts. "You —you yourself are in danger, too," she whispered, trembling; "you must fly, but first help me to save M. de la Barre."

"I! how can I—in danger myself?"

"You are all-powerful with Barré," she hastily answered—(Barré was a friend of M. Noailly's)—and M. des Écherolles, touched by her generous self-devotion, for this attempt to save the colonel was simply risking her life, consented to use his influence. Barré was sent for; he listened as if to the most ordinary request, found a boat, and a trustworthy woman to row it, dropped down the river, and walked coolly into the hôtel where the colonel had concealed himself, and sat listening to the angry cries of those who came and went, furious at his escape, and demanding his life. A few

words explained who Barré was, and why he had come: M. de la Barre hurried to the boat, and was conveyed to a place of comparative safety, while his deliverer returned joyfully to the Des Écherolles, to assure them of his escape, and seemed wonderstruck to find they seemed to think he had done something heroic in venturing his head for an unknown fugitive. Madame Tourneur, the traiteur's wife, had lingered anxiously to hear the result, and now urged M. des Écherolles also to fly, bringing forward such urgent reasons for his leaving Lyons at once, that his family could but join their entreaties to hers. He could not protect them by staying; nay, his very presence was a source of danger. Convinced against his will, he went out into the dark night, knowing as little where he should go as they did.

The little visitors now became a great anxiety. Mademoiselle des Écherolles felt even more responsible for them than for her niece, and was thankful to find a humble connection of their father's in whose charge to place them. Alexandrine knew well that separation for a few hours at such a time might extend into separation for a lifetime, and was still weeping over the parting, when the mistress of the house entered, with an air that foreboded storm, and desired them, with the imperious insolence of a landlady who knows herself in the wrong and is resolved to brave it out, to leave her house that moment.

"Madame, you have no right to send us away,"

answered Mademoiselle des Écherolles; "I hired these rooms for a fixed period, and they are still mine."

"I do not care what you may say," returned the landlady, "nobody knows you; people declare that you are aristocrats—why, it is enough to get my house pillaged. Not only must you go, but I will have no traces of you left here."

"Where can I go? I know no one."

"Wherever you please: it is all one to me."

She seized on the nearest article of furniture as she spoke—furniture all bought by her lodgers—and carried off and locked up everything in the rooms with such energy that in half an hour they looked as if no one had ever lived in them, while she repeated, "The Marseillais will pass by here this evening, and I will not have them suspecting me of harbouring aristocrats."

Any one who has been turned out of lodgings unexpectedly will in some small measure imagine the distress and perplexity of Mademoiselle des Écherolles, complicated, too, by everything which could add to the embarrassment, and making communication with her brother even more difficult than before, since now he would know as little where they were as they did whither he had fled. But the old saying, that "Charbonnier est maître chez lui," is even truer of landladies, and they found themselves and their two servants turned into the street, with the burning sun pouring fierce rays upon their heads, and all their possessions comprised in such bundles as they had hurriedly put together. The

only person to whom they could turn was Madame Noailly, daughter-in-law of the farmer, who certainly, with his family, entirely acquitted the debt of gratitude which he owed M. des Écherolles. She received them kindly, but was almost as much at a loss how to dispose of them as they were how to dispose of themselves. Half a room for the whole party in a country house of her father's was all that she could offer them, and they thankfully accepted it. Her husband was absent, she did not know where, nor could she, as they had faintly hoped, give any news of M. des Écherolles. They went on foot to the country house, and though it was at no great distance from Lyons, the journey was a difficult one to poor Mademoiselle des Écherolles, who was stout, wore high-heeled shoes, and was unaccustomed to walking. Hot and tired, they reached their refuge, and examined their bundles to see what they had brought. Alexandrine had stuffed the pockets of her apron with everything that they could hold, and was delighted with her forethought, though the result could not have been great, for when her aunt opened her own package, which she had made up in hurry and consternation, it was found to contain only her lace caps. She laughed with her imperturbable good humour, and Alexandrine felt herself becoming a thoughtful, grown-up person—poor child! The dinner was sad, and the supper sadder, for all were tired, and in complete uncertainty as to the future, while the want of employment, the enforced waiting for they knew not what, was very

depressing. A sharp knocking at the door aroused them from sleep to the thought, It has come! The police were there, but only to give the common order of illuminating the house. As the whole party had only lain down dressed, they were ready to rise at any moment, and they were kept awake, after this first alarm, by a wild clamour, and trampling steps of a bloody, drunken crowd passing along the road. They looked furtively from the window—what would it be to fall into such hands! Mademoiselle des Écherolles suffered nothing of the agonizing fears for the child whom she loved to appear, and persuaded all the party to lie down again. Sleep came at last, only to be scared by a sudden piercing cry. All started up, believing their last hour was at hand, and discovered that the screams proceeded from a little child belonging to their hostess, who had fallen out of bed.

It was impossible for the Des Écherolles to remain crowded into this room, and the next day they drove back to Lyons; accepting an invitation to sleep for one night at an hotel kept by Madame Noailly's father. They found that ten thousand persons had fled from the city the evening before, and slept where they could, or wandered in the fields. In the midst of such distress and uncertainty, it was a doubtful joy when M. des Écherolles suddenly appeared. He had come back at all risks to seek his family, and provide for the safety of the little De Piolencs. Arrangements had been made for sending them that night to their father at Chambéry.

Alexandrine was able to see them again, and in the unexpected joy of the meeting the children's spirits revived, and they felt sure they should soon be together again. They parted with promises of constantly writing to one another. Poor children! long years of tribulation lay between them and their next meeting; Chambéry soon became as unsafe as Lyons, and they escaped on foot with their father into exile and privation.

Under the common name of Giraud, M. des Écherolles hoped to remain unnoticed in Lyons. He took a lodging in a new quarter, putting up as best they could with one bedroom, a large one, fortunately, where there was a good-sized bed for Alexandrine and her aunt, and a small rye pallet for himself. They spent the winter there unmolested, but in deep and increasing sadness; the king had been executed, and danger and death knocked at every door. Night was made hideous by the fear of domiciliary visits, and sleep was broken by the calls of the sentinels placed at regular distances along the streets. Sometimes, as the Des Écherolles sat at supper, the tramp of feet would be heard without, and all the little party would turn pale and look silently at each other until the steps had gone by, and the fatal knock and summons were heard at another door. Every family lived in isolation, fearing their neighbours, and desirous of escaping observation. All public education was at an end, and what is commonly called society existed no longer. That very Jacobin whose oration Alexandrine had heard in Roanne was now in

Lyons, stirring up the populace to set up the guillotine *en permanence*, seize the town, and behead alike all aristocrats, moderates, rich, neuters, egoïstes, dévots, and relations of emigrants. It must be confessed that had all these classes, especially the egoïstes, been thus summarily disposed of, the population of Lyons would have been alarmingly diminished. A day for a general rising of the Reds was fixed on, but a rumour of it got abroad, and all those in Lyons who had anything to lose combined in desperation to defend themselves, attacked the Hôtel de Ville, the stronghold of the Jacobins, seized and executed their infamous president, the Abbé Challier, and, after a fierce struggle, suppressed the republicans. The passive manner in which the towns of France submitted to the Jacobins has often been matter of wonder and reproach, but Lyons at least is free from blame on that score. The result was not, however, encouraging: the brief triumph of order was to be cruelly avenged.

The Bishop of Lyons was Lamourette, a highly educated man, and one of the most distinguished priests of the Oratory. There had been great troubles in the Church on account of the oath required of the clergy by the Republic. Most stood firm in refusing it; some, all of whom perished, took a middle place between the jurors and non-jurors, accepting the constitution civile with certain restrictions. The Oratorians were led away by the new doctrines of the revolution, and Lamourette owed his see to his adhesion to them. Later, however,

he nobly atoned for his mistake, confessing and comforting the wounded, and dying amid a rain of shot and shell, which killed two of his priests by his side. Wounded, and carried a prisoner to the Conciergerie, Baron Beugnot met him there, and was struck with his calm cheerfulness, and noticed him reciting his breviary with his rival in good works, M. Emery, prior of St. Sulpice. Called before the Revolutionary Tribunal, he professed himself a repentant Christian, and charged M. Beugnot to make known his retractation of his errors to the world.

During December, 1793, Chambolle des Écherolles had arrived in Paris, unable longer to endure the uncertainty as to the fate of his family. He contrived to let them know that he was there, but far from giving them joy, it seemed the worst news which had yet reached them. Only those who lived at such a period could enter into the deadly terror which it brought, for if recognized as a returned emigrant, certain death was his lot. He had returned in disguise; a carter had had pity on the young lad, whose history he guessed; lent him frock and whip, and bade him drive his horses. He reached Paris with thirty sous in his pocket, took a room in a poor tavern, and worked as a quarry-man, while awaiting an answer to a letter which he had despatched to Écherolles. But at Écherolles were only poor little Odille and her nurse, and no answer came. This silence made him forebode the worst, and his letter imploring information from an old friend in

that neighbourhood remained equally unanswered. He supposed that all his family had perished, and a kind of reckless despair seized him. He was startled into a less morbid state of mind by finding himself in great danger, for it is one thing to wish to die, and another to find one's self on the point of being killed, and the guillotine seemed very likely to be his portion, his fair snowy skin and distinguished air having awakened suspicion, and a little chatterbox of a child, the daughter of his landlady, declared eagerly that she was sure he must be an aristocrat. He felt that he must leave Paris at once, and raised a little money by selling all the clothes that he could spare. As he returned from this errand he chanced to pass before a ruined and deserted church. It recalled thoughts almost lost in the hard recklessness born of perpetual danger; he entered, knelt and prayed; a new courage seemed to fill his heart. With a light step he returned to the tavern, paid his bill, and announced that he was going away. As he turned to leave the house, the little damsel who had shown such inconvenient interest in him exclaimed, "Mamma! you have never given him his letter!" A letter! there was hope in the mere word, and it proved to be a reply from the friend to whom he had written, telling very cautiously, but in a way that was clear enough to him, the history and present residence of his family, and enclosing money. His letter had been long in reaching her, for she, too, had been forced to remove from the neighbourhood of Écherolles. Chambolle felt as if he

trod on air. He left Paris immediately, and, in defiance of danger, went to see his old home—the home which he had only seen in dreams for what felt to him an interminable time. Deserted and sad, still there was much unchanged in it; he looked with greedy, hungry eyes at every window, its two low towers and shady trees; he stooped and kissed the threshold, believing that no one would recognize him, and unable to estimate how like he was to his father; but an old servant of the family saw him pass through the village, and knew him at once. After a few confidential words, Chambolle accepted the offer of a *patache*, with a fanatical Republican for a driver, who, not guessing whom he had for a companion, was the safest of comrades in a journey to Lyons, since his opinions seemed to guarantee those of his passenger. But Chambolle had a hard struggle to command himself and not betray the indignation boiling within him when, their way leading past Écherolles, the driver observed, "That château belongs to Des Écherolles, a rascal of an aristocrat, whose sons have emigrated—if we had the three of them, how we would make them dance!" It appeared afterwards that two other persons had known Chambolle, but they kept the secret. Notwithstanding all that he had gone through, so little did he recognize the imperative necessity of caution, that on arriving at Lyons, he sent a letter announcing his coming to his family by post, and this at a time when letters were opened and read by the authorities, for though the town was not now governed by Red

Republicans, the emigrants and their relations were in as much danger as ever. His father, in the utmost anxiety, went to the small inn where the note was dated, and inquired about a young man, just come, who wanted a place as a servant. Not finding him, he left a note, cautiously worded, and walked backwards and forwards in the square, on the watch for his son, but no Chambolle was seen; and weary and very anxious, M. des Écherolles returned home to disappoint his sister and daughter by his unsuccessful search. Late, in the dusk, Chambolle entered, so changed that they hardly knew him. "Where can you have been?" asked the father, when the first greetings were over.

"At the theatre."

"At the theatre!" exclaimed his astonished listeners.

"Yes, I hoped to find you the quicker: my heart and eyes sought you everywhere."

The displeasure passed from M. des Écherolles' face, but the marvel remained. At the theatre! That he should have gone there when concealment was all essential, or expected to find his family there, seemed inexplicable; but Chambolle was so young, so used to danger, that he felt quite at his ease in it. This meeting was poisoned by the knowledge that an emigrant bore death with him for himself and all who harboured him. He was so like his father, too!

A faithful friend procured him a commission in the Artillery, under a feigned name, but he dared not remain

with his family, or even visit them, lest it should be known that one of their emigrant sons had returned.

The National Convention did not long delay to execute their threat of punishing Lyons for its resistance to the Jacobins; and it became known that an army of 60,000 men were marching against the town. Only a few thousands of the citizens could be trusted to defend it, for work was at a standstill, and the dangerous quarter of the Croix Rousse, where the *canuts*, as the silk-weavers are locally called, lived crowded in their narrow streets, were all Republican to a man, and much more likely to betray the city than to guard it. The other towns of France left Lyons to stand or fall alone, and no opposition could be made to its investment by the besieging army, which poured shells and red-hot shot upon the town, and cut off all communication with the outlying country. Probably no one slept in Lyons on that first night of the bombardment. In the house inhabited by the Des Écherolles their room was held the safest. There all the occupants of the other apartments crowded, exchanging hopes and fears, while M. des Écherolles, with the coolness of an old soldier, lay down and slept, saying that a good night's rest would make him all the fitter for military duty; and he was roused neither by the roar of the cannon nor the rattle of musketry from the walls, nor the outcries in the room, as the trembling watchers looked from the window, and started back when a bomb came too near. After a time—if death did not come too—the bombs caused a sort of

agreeable excitement, and then ceased to startle any one; people went out in the streets regardless of peril, and hardly moved as one passed overhead; but on this first night each one was watched with the fascination of terror, and the night was spent at the windows, gazing at the missiles passing by, looking like tremulous moving stars, curving, falling, and whistling through the air. The very tension of Alexandrine's nerves made her keenly susceptible to any ludicrous incident, and the sight of a M. Berthelier, who had taken refuge amongst the little crowd, creeping on tiptoe to the window, as if he were afraid that the bombs might hear him, peeping out, with curious, awe-struck looks, and then, as a shell whizzed by, precipitately hiding himself in the muslin window curtain, amused her so much that she startled the frightened spectators by bursting into a hearty fit of laughter. Just then such a blood-red glare spread over the sky that a cry of terror rang through the room. Every one thought that the next houses were on fire. Alexandrine darted to her father's bedside—once before she had done so—crying, "Mon père; get up! get up!"

"What is it, my child?" he asked, without opening his eyes.

"The bombs, father! they might fall here! you would be killed!"

"They will not fall here," he murmured, and was fast asleep almost before the words left his lips. Alexandrine learned to be equally indifferent in the nine weeks which the siege lasted; but on this night his tranquillity seemed

so out of harmony with the general agitation, that she was almost glad of a real reason for awakening him. "Fire! fire! my father, do get up!"

"Ah! ah!" he muttered, sleepily, "where?"

"Close, close; see, the very sky is ablaze!"

He was effectually roused now, and got up immediately; but his composure contrasted singularly with the fevered impatience of the young girl, who had but just reached her fourteenth year. She was relieved to see him no longer asleep amid the excitement, though, when he went out into the streets, she knew that he was really in more danger. The Arsenal had been set on fire by traitors within the city, and one blaze after another sprang up, glowing through drifting smoke, and spreading destruction through every quarter of Lyons. M. des Écherolles returned, and consented to take Alexandrine out with him, and they stepped from rock to rock along the course of the Saône, then unusually low, watching the wild and magnificent sight. More than 300 houses were in flames; rich and poor were flying from the fire into the storm of bombs; the batteries of the Convention thundered upon the burning quarters, rendering all attempts to put out the flames almost hopeless; Alexandrine counted six distinct fires in the town. A voice which sounded familiar addressed them; by the lurid light they recognized Félicité de Bellecise, who had come out alone, heedless of the hour or the danger, and was gazing anxiously in the direction of her brother-in-law's printing-press, on the other side

"Fire! fire!" P. 286

of the river, running blood-red under the rushing flames. She saw that one fire must be near or in M. Milanès' printing-house, and exclaimed, "If it is there, I must go to my sister," and hurried to the nearest bridge. Here she was stopped by a sentinel, who said that his orders forbade any one's passing. She implored in vain; but when she found him inexorable, she ran home at her utmost speed, found a man's dress, and with pistols in her belt boldly returned, answering his question of "Where are you going?" with "To my post." "What post?" "La Croix Rousse." "Pass."

So many mere boys had been armed to defend the city, that no suspicions were roused by her slender figure and young voice, and no one had time to notice her after she crossed the bridge into the dangerous Croix Rousse. She found her sister calm in the midst of peril, and occupied in binding up the wounds of an ouvrier, who had been struck by a splinter of the bomb which had set the house on fire. Félicité stayed all night, lending effectual help until the flames were extinguished, and returned home in the dawning, which broke chill and pale over the unhappy city, where death and destruction had been so busy for many hours, and countless families were now ruined and homeless. A general order was issued that casks filled with water should be placed before every house, in case of fire; this work chiefly fell to the women, as the men were defending the walls, and Alexandrine was struck with the cheerful alacrity with which her aunt helped in

labour very fatiguing to her. M. des Écherolles had been asked to take the post of Commander of the defence, but refused, thinking himself too little known to inspire sufficient confidence, but the care of one of the gates fell to his charge, and he was scarcely ever at home. Provisions grew dear and scarce; the poor, and the class just above them, began to suffer cruelly, and the curé of the parish where the Des Écherolles lived begged Alexandrine and a young companion to accompany him on a quête for their relief. It was a sad and discouraging mission, sometimes cheered by unlooked-for success, sometimes full of annoyance. They entered every house, and in the richer ones were often ill received; but in the poorer they often reaped an unexpected harvest. On one occasion they went into so wretched a hut that they were withdrawing without even explaining their errand, when the owner ran after them, calling them back, and offering an assignat of fifty francs. They next went to a pretty house standing in its garden, where a lady had taken refuge from her own less safe part of the town, as this quarter was considered comparatively secure, and therefore numbers of strangers had fled there. The pictures on the walls, the luxury of the rooms, contrasted startlingly with the scene which they had just left, and the beautifully-dressed lady who entered seemed scarcely to belong to the same race as the poor creature who had followed them with her unasked gift. The curé explained his mission, and the girls proffered

their request for a contribution. "Monsieur," was the stiff answer, "I am sorry that I do not belong to this parish."

"Madame," said the good curé, in his gentle voice, "charity and the sad events which overwhelm us will not allow us to confine our almsgiving within such bounds."

"But, sir, I tell you I am not a parishioner. I am only here for a time."

"Madame," he replied, with a little severity, "you have sought here a refuge against dangers which threaten you elsewhere, therefore my parish is yours. Could you not do some good in return for the safety you find?" She evidently thought this persistence extremely ill-mannered, and answered sourly, "Sir, I love the poor; I give a great deal to the people in my own parish, and to give to you would be stealing from them."

With a hasty curtsey, she disappeared into the next room, shutting the door sharply behind her.

They pushed their expeditions within gunshot of the enemy, somewhat protected, however, by their own batteries, but each day the besieged were driven further in, and death gathered in his harvest. Thirty thousand people perished in a few weeks, and want grew to famine. The quêtes did not produce much, but helped to supply the most pressing needs. Bread became detestably bad, except such as was made in secret in a few houses; the flour used in the shops was fermented,

and the rations allotted to each person by the town consisted only of a certain quantity of barley and oil, or dried fruits. M. des Écherolles, as a soldier, had an additional allowance of bread and meat, which he brought home, and it formed the chief meal of his sister, child, and two servants. They spread mattresses in a spare room for homeless people, who thankfully crowded to it. The Hôtel Dieu was thronged by sick and wounded, but it became the most unsafe place in the town, for its black flag, far from protecting it, seemed only to attract the fire of the besiegers, who rained red-hot shot upon it, and set it repeatedly on fire. The all-importance of passing events absorbed all thoughts, and inconvenience and privation seemed hardly felt in the struggle for life. The national light-heartedness served the besieged well at this time; a party of young men would come into the Des Écherolles' room, jaded and exhausted, fling themselves down on the mattresses, and after a brief rest spring up, refreshed and gay, ready to hasten back to the walls. All the gallant devotion shown was to no purpose. Each day the besiegers gained ground, and the besieged were gradually driven out of the suburbs of St. Etienne and Montbrison back upon the town. Deep silence and depression pervaded the city. Countless households were in mourning, and every day some of those who had gone forth returned no more. Many women went to the walls with their husbands, and died beside them. So evidently hopeless was the cause, that M. des

Écherolles ordered his son to escape from Lyons while yet it was possible. All Chambolle's filial obedience hardly enabled him to listen, and it was with bitter tears that he quitted his family and the city in this hour of danger. Famine pressed the Lyonnais hard. Traitors in the town signalled to the storehouses where provisions were kept, by carrying lights at night backwards and forwards before them, after which it was observed that the bombs of the besiegers were especially directed thither. Alexandrine felt great pity for an old marquis who lived in her quarter. For years he had lived on milk, and now vainly implored mercy for his cow, who was ruthlessly sacrificed to public needs. The families driven out of Montbrison were lodged by charitable Lyonnais, and those who had no room to spare sent food, some giving bread, some a little bit of meat, Mademoiselle des Écherolles contributed all she could, namely, a few beans. Only the Rhone and the city walls now interposed between the besieged and their enemies; all the suburbs were taken; a general attack took place, and the house of the Des Écherolles was between three batteries. The noise was deafening; balls whistled incessantly against the windows. M. des Écherolles was seldom able to snatch a moment to return home from his weary task of encouraging troops, who would only throw themselves flat to escape the storm of bullets, saying that they were paid to fight, but life was worth more than pay—in fact, in their hearts they favoured the enemy. Meanwhile the

women sat at home, suffering the anguish of forced inaction when all was struggle around. Alexandrine's youth and health made it all the harder part only to stand and wait. The past seemed rising continually before her as she sat in expectation of death, and the loving self-devotion of her aunt seemed to strike her with reproach and wonder. She surprised and touched Mademoiselle des Écherolles by asking her pardon for the rebellion and ingratitude which she had often shown. So many hours elapsed before they heard anything of M. des Écherolles, that they began to believe him dead; they stood at their window, with their eyes fixed and strained on a height where the battle was raging, and even the bullets which shattered the glass could not drive them away. They saw the townspeople driven back pell mell, and wounded men carried away, while women rushed into the streets shrieking, "Here they are! all is lost!" So passed that day.

Even in the misery of suspense Alexandrine was sometimes amused. The landlord's daughter came in, saying, with a sort of trembling triumph, "We must do all we can to save ourselves, so I have put my handkerchief on wrong way out."

"But how will that save you?"

"They will take me for a canut's daughter!"

"Poor child! do you think they will stop to look?"

The unconcealed joy of the Republican party in Lyons was both exasperating and alarming, and no one ventured to open his door except to a preconcerted

signal. To the indescribable relief of Alexandrine and her aunt, they recognized the knock agreed on with M. des Écherolles, and he entered, blackened with gunpowder and exhausted with fighting, his clothes pierced with balls, like those of the two friends who accompanied him. Alexandrine hastened to set such food as the larder afforded before them, but there was only bad bread and a little ham. They ate in haste; but one was wounded in the throat, and could hardly swallow; one was the Comte de Clermont Tonnerre, whose gaiety enlivened even these dreary days. They seized every short interval in their duties to rest themselves, that they might be the fitter to return to them; and thus it happened that they were playing piquet with M. des Écherolles, when an outcry and crash in the adjoining room caused him to start up and run out to discover the cause. The Count followed him, and burst out laughing at the scene which met his eyes. The kitchen floor was strewn with broken eggs, amid which stood the man-servant, aghast, before the speechless indignation of his master, who recovered his voice when M. de Clermont Tonnerre exclaimed, "What a splendid omelette! upon my word, I never saw such a gigantic one!" and cried, "Seven dozen and a half! our hope! our resource! we were carefully keeping them! was it for you to break?"

"I am very sorry," muttered the culprit, as he began to sweep up the wreck, "the basket was up there; I wanted to reach something, and ——"

"And you are a clumsy scoundrel! Not one saved!"

The Count, still in fits of laughter, returned to his game. Only those who have gone through the difficulties and privations of a siege can imagine how mournfully M. des Écherolles continued to repeat—"Not one left!"

On the night of September 29, M. des Écherolles was heard calling to his family from the street. They ran down to him. "Get into the town," he said; "I dared not send you this message for fear of increasing the general discouragement; we cannot hold out long; the enemy must conquer this post to-night, and you would be among the first victims. Farewell! if God wills it, I shall see you again!"

They gathered their few possessions and went back to an old lodging, too unhappy to feel alarmed by the bullets whistling over their heads. Resistance was evidently useless, and many of the defenders of Lyons secretly left the city, hoping that more mercy would be shown to the women and children if the active offenders were gone. Some escaped in a dense fog, others, with wives or sisters who would not be left behind, were surrounded and cut to pieces. Alexandrine saw a child of a year old with a sabre cut across its face. M. des Écherolles remained with his family, and removed them to a lodging in the Place de Bellecourt, close to the Hôtel de la Charité, under the vain idea that the besiegers would respect this refuge of the sick and wretched; and the nuns, believing the same, promised the ladies of his family to disguise them in the costume of poor

people, and take them in, should a general massacre take place. The beds were full of wounded men, very ill off for mere necessaries, but patient and thankful. Alas! when the Jacobins entered Lyons, all those found to be wounded with fire-arms were dragged out and shot! The one cow still left in the city was devoted to the enfans trouvés. Among the good sisters and the old people who filled great part of the hospitals, Alexandrine and her aunt passed a brief time of peace; but returning thence one day, Alexandrine was nearly killed. She was standing at the door, and hearing the hiss of a bomb she involuntarily stooped; it struck the wall just above her head. This familiarity with danger ended by making every one careless of it. She went out after this narrow escape without any fresh fear, and was paying a visit to a lady living in the Place Bellecourt, when a servant rushed in to tell his mistress that a house close by, belonging to her, had been set on fire by a shell. "Is there any one putting it out?" she asked. "Yes, madame." "Very good," answered she, and resumed the conversation with her guests. Every hour came the news of the death of some friend or acquaintance; death was everywhere. They felt as if living in a whirlwind, and ceased to fear. The power of feeling acutely seemed worn out.

On the 9th of October, 1793, the enemy entered Lyons quietly. Alexandrine, looking out, saw a man pushing along a light cart, filled with butter and poultry, luxuries long excluded. "The city is taken!" she cried.

It was so, and universal dismay and helplessness ensued. Up to that time each of the besieged had felt himself part of a united body; now each became a mere unprotected unit. The Des Écherolles had moved in great haste to a safer part of the town; with much alarm M. des Écherolles discovered that he had left important papers in his last lodging. His sister was too bad a walker to go and fetch them, and it was too dangerous to venture himself, so that there was no choice but to send Alexandrine, with her maid. He hoped that she would return before the soldiers entered that quarter, but before she got back the streets were full of them, and at a street-corner a fat, red-faced man, very merry and very drunk, seized the poor child's arm, exclaiming, "Great heavens! what a small arm—how thin you are! Poor little thing, you have fasted finely during the siege, you cannot even have had your allowance of oats. What a small arm! I never did see such a small one!"

He held it fast; a laughing crowd gathered; and she struggled in vain until he dropped it to lift up his hands with fresh outcries, and she escaped, hearing him still exclaiming, "Heavens! what a thin arm!"

In this time of need a friend unexpectedly appeared in the army of the Convention itself, who, in the general confusion, carried the Colonel off to the Quartier Général, where he lived unsuspected among his bitterest enemies, who never thought of seeking him there. This friend was a good, weak man, who sided with the Jacobins only with the hope of saving his wife and

child, but protected all whom he could, and ventured perilously much for the Des Écherolles. One of the Convention, Dubois de Crancé, was a distant relation of Alexandrine's mother, and her aunt took her to implore his protection. It was a hopeless attempt, for this Dubois had said, "I have no relations." They found a tall, black-haired man, shaving, while his servant held for him a silver basin. "So the citizen representatives get all our plate," thought Alexandrine, while a graceful woman whom he called his wife received them. His real wife was living on a scanty allowance in Champagne. He asked Alexandrine shortly who she was, and, scarcely listening to her aunt's answer, remarked, "Thou art very young, but thou hast the look of an aristocrat. Know'st thou that I make every one tremble?" Alexandrine was too angry to tremble. He read the petition which she had offered him, and coldly said that he could do nothing for them. She was much annoyed at her aunt having condescended to ask aid from this man, little foreseeing to how many yet worse she should herself appeal, and equally in vain, in the next few months.

To the sorrow of the Des Écherolles, their friend the Count of Clermont Tonnerre and his nephew were among the first victims of the Convention; they were betrayed by their secretary, who hoped to buy his own safety by his treason. The younger man was led at once to the Place de Bellecourt to be shot. He refused to have his eyes bound, and fell shouting "Vive le roi!"

The traitor shared his fate. Such innumerable arrests took place, followed immediately by executions, that M. des Écherolles lost all hope of escaping, and the fatal moment seemed come when one night a domiciliary visit took place while the household were in bed. He feigned a tranquillity which he was far from feeling, and remained in bed while his papers were minutely examined. Strange to say, he was not arrested, but two soldiers were quartered on him, who slept in the kitchen, and cooked for fifteen of their comrades. At first they showed extreme displeasure at having to live amongst "aristocrats," but gradually became friendly, and even invited the two servants, St. Jean and Cantal, to dine with them. By way of showing gratitude, St. Jean contributed a bottle of wine, boasting loudly of its excellence. However, it answered so little to his praises, that one of the soldiers believed himself poisoned. "They warned us that the aristocrats would try it," he cried, furiously, and was only calmed by seeing St. Jean himself drink down a whole glass of what proved to be good vinegar.

M. des Écherolles kept out of sight, and they were not aware of his being still in the house, until one unlucky day, when he suddenly met a soldier. He spoke calmly, as if he had nothing to fear, and some time passed quietly enough. However, at last one of those low hurried knocks which made all hearts leap in terror came at the Des Écherolles' door just as they were going to bed. The voice of a neighbour's servant whispered,

"Awake! . . . they are come to arrest you; there is not a minute to lose. . . . . They knocked below; I sent them round to the other door . . . . there is not an instant to lose." M. des Écherolles sprang out of bed and hurried across to the rooms of Madame de Souligné, who had sent the warning; voices were heard crying, "He is getting away; a door shut!" and there was a rush of soldiers towards Cantal, who had gone to meet them, candle in hand. "Where is he? A door opened; some one moved."—"Well, citizens, we had to move to open a door to let you in." "You have been furiously long in doing so, but we shall get him, for we know where he is."

St. Jean, who never could hold his tongue, had betrayed the secret of M. des Écherolles being in the house. Alexandrine was sleeping with her aunt; her father's little empty bed caught the soldiers' eyes. "Where is he? where is he?" they cried, looking in vain for further traces of him. "Who?" asked his poor sister, as calmly as she could. "Giraud des Écherolles." "Gone." "Where is his room?"—"Here." "Where does he sleep?"—"In that bed." "Some one has been in it."—"When he is away my maid sleeps there." "Very fine, but we do not believe a word of it."

They placed sentinels and continued to search the house. Alexandrine heard them knock at the door of Madame de Souligné's apartment; as far as she knew there was not a corner where he could be concealed, but they returned without him, and the two poor women

could breathe again. Cantal and St. Jean would have been carried off instead of him, but for the two soldiers domiciled in the house. They had stayed quietly in bed, and the one who had not seen M. des Écherolles deposed to his absence; the other held his tongue. Towards morning, all being quiet, Madame de Souligné's maid came to ask for clothes for the fugitive, who had remained in a small room, with a wardrobe pushed before the door outside. He had heard voices and steps so close that he gave himself up for lost. There was a brief moment of happiness in this reunion, but the sword of Damocles was hanging over their heads; all their friends were in the same position, no one dared try to help another, and terror and helplessness were universal. They thought of kind Madame Tournouer, who had once already come to their aid, and little Alexandrine was sent to seek her. She was hardly fourteen years old, and so slender and pale that she looked much younger, and attracted no notice. Madame Tournouer kept a sort of inn. She consented to receive M. des Écherolles, and sent Alexandrine to the other end of Lyons, to a M. Clémençon, a friend of Chambolle's. He was absent, but his wife, though a total stranger to those who implored her aid, showed the utmost kindness, and not only lent her husband's uniform, but offered to come with a trustworthy friend to escort M. des Écherolles disguised as a National Guard. In this way he reached Madame Tournouer's inn, which was full of Republicans, which gave her

a good excuse for proposing that the ladies and their National Guard should avoid the noise and bustle by sitting in the garden. They left him in a nest of enemies, who would have torn him in pieces had they guessed his name, yet such were the times that it seemed a haven of refuge. Arrangements were made by which one of those little boats called *bêches*, rowed by women, was brought at night up the Saône, to the garden wall; he got into it, and was conveyed to a house which, being under sequestration, was supposed to be empty. "On vivait à la minute alors," is Alexandrine's comment in speaking of this perilous refuge. It was necessary to maintain absolute silence, but his restlessness made inaction impossible; a rumour got abroad that some one was in the sequestered apartment, and he had barely time to slip out before it was examined. A lady who had never before heard of him hid him for three days; he never heard of her afterwards. It was a time when strangers risked their lives for strangers, while the Jacobins, crying out for fraternity, were firing on the Hôtel Dieu, declaring that there were "muscadins" among the sick, and set it on fire five times.

It was time, indeed, that M. des Écherolles should go, for a deputation from the section in which his family lived came to seal up all their goods, talking, as they did so, of property appropriated by them in other houses, and agreeing on what they should take here. They left, as keeper of the seals, an important little old man, in a

grey coat, a wig, and an ivory-headed cane, who strutted about with the air of a master of the house. "The citizen Forêt is to eat with thee, warm himself at thy fire, and live in thy room," was the laconic discourse with which they departed. Alexandrine's education had hitherto been in some measure continued, but from this day it ceased entirely; her drawing-master had fled, and she hastened to warn her English master not to venture near her.

Mademoiselle des Écherolles was calm and brave, indifferent to the loss of all comfort, and only thinking of Alexandrine. That same evening another domiciliary visit took place, and she was closely questioned as to what had become of her brother. "I do not know," she answered, with perfect truth. "Well, then, if we cannot find the brother, we will take the sister," said the municipal officer. "You will not say where he is. Well, thou shalt stay in prison till thou dost. Come, march!"

Alexandrine started up, but a warning look reminded her of her aunt's whispered orders, when the officers had entered, to be silent. Mademoiselle des Écherolles asked leave to take some clothes with her, but the request was refused. She forced herself to seem indifferent to the parting with her darling, and went without daring to look at her. Alexandrine heard her ask, "Where am I going?"—"You will soon see," was the rough answer, and the door closed, leaving the desolate child behind. St. Jean followed at a distance, and saw

her taken to the section du Change. They made up a bundle of sheets and linen to send her. Forêt let them do so; but when St. Jean was about to carry it off, he refused to let it go. "But the things are hers! they are for her!" Alexandrine exclaimed. "I am sorry; but it is impossible." "She is aged; she will suffer."—"I am sorry; but it is impossible," Forêt repeated, and they felt that he was their master. They were almost prisoners themselves, for they could not stir out without his leave.

Mademoiselle des Écherolles was kept all night in the hall of the section, and all night long many other captives were brought in. At dawn they were transferred to the Récluses, their future prison. For a day or two Alexandrine could not learn where her aunt was. When she heard it, she entreated a lady under obligations to her family to send a mattress to Mademoiselle des Écherolles. The request was refused. It was now very necessary to obtain an order for bread. In each section there were only a certain number of bakers who might sell it. They closed their shops to keep out the throng, and each buyer advanced in turn to a sort of little wicket, and offered the order from his section for so many ounces of bread, then passed on, and all the throng advanced one step. The file of anxious purchasers often filled several streets, and the last got their breakfast about 5 P.M.

Poor little Alexandrine stole trembling into the hall of her section, scarcely daring to speak before all these

strange men. Happily, she saw the one who had sealed up her possessions, and told him that her aunt was arrested. "Ah, ah!" said he, "we let her alone, but others have been less polite. Citizens, I think this little girl ought to see her aunt, who is a kind of mother to her; we may allow it."

Encouraged by getting a written permission to enter the prison, she asked for a bread order, but this was roughly refused. "But, citizens," she remonstrated, "you know we cannot get bread without an order; what am I to do?"

"As you can."

"Am I to die of hunger?"

"Not you; you *ci-devants* have all private means; you belong to the aristocrats, who always get on; you have inherited their spirit of intrigue; you will not die of hunger."

"Well, if you give no bread, you cannot find fault if I give none to the guardian whom you ordered us to feed."

"Oh, he is a good citizen, and shall have his order. You will do well enough."

She hastened to Les Récluses; the jailor hesitated, looked at the little slight child, whose imploring eyes were fixed on his face, and let her pass into a court, so full of eager expectation that she only realized that she was in the midst of criminals on hearing the clank of fetters, and seeing fierce, wild faces press round her, while rough voices demanded alms. She hurried down

a long dark passage, leading to a staircase, on which was seated one of these men, talking to a painted woman in gaudy rags, before whose bold eyes those of Alexandrine sank. How horrible everything was in this prison! When she reached the first floor she hoped to find herself with her aunt, but the turnkey had forgotten his keys, and went to fetch them, leaving her alone, looking at two new locks and three bolts; every door on the landing was thus guarded. The political prisoners were far more strictly guarded than the criminals. At last the door opened; Alexandrine darted in, and found herself among a number of strangers, who asked, "Are you a prisoner?"—"No, no," she cried, "where is my aunt?" Mademoiselle des Écherolles heard her voice, and hurried up, delighted to see her child again. "How have you managed? are you well?" she asked; and Alexandrine eagerly inquired in return after her health and her prospects. The ladies confined with Mademoiselle des Écherolles, many of them with children of their own left desolate, stood by, much touched, and hoping that their dear ones might appear as unexpectedly as this little girl. Mademoiselle des Écherolles made her sit on a mattress on the floor, which she had received after passing several nights on straw. There was no other furniture in the room except a few mattresses, and of the fifty women confined there, most slept on straw.

Mademoiselle des Écherolles was cheerful and full of thought for others, as of old; she was bright with joy at seeing Alexandrine, and they talked over these sad

late days almost gaily. When it was time to go, all the ladies charged Alexandrine with messages for their families, and she spent great part of that night in taking them all over Lyons, too happy to carry such welcome intelligence to feel weary. She was allowed to enter the prison the next day, but her permit extended no further. She told Forêt her trouble, knowing that he had a son in power, but Forêt stood in great awe of "my son the municipal," as he called him, and feared to ask such a favour as a fresh permit. Forêt was not actively unkind, and did not share the bloodthirstiness of his son; he had been a silk weaver, working hard all the week, and spending all he had earned on the Sunday. He enjoyed the easy work of keeping the seals, but seemed rather uneasy at being among "ferocious animals," as he called the aristocrats. For the first few days he appeared *en grande tenue*, partly, perhaps, from his old respect for the nobles, which he could not entirely get rid of, although he had turned Jacobin; but, growing more at ease, he left off his wig, wore a grey cap and slippers, and appropriated an arm-chair by the fireside to his special use. From time to time he would turn round, pat the back, admire it, then, leaning back heavily, say, with great satisfaction, "Certainly an arm-chair is a grand invention!" Then feeling the cushions again, "How well imagined it is!" He had never been so comfortable in his life. Alexandrine soon saw that his was a kind, dull nature, without courage of any kind; he hated the executions, but was afraid to own it, with his wife and

son urging on him that he "must move with the times." "I cannot get used to it," he once said confidentially to Alexandrine. "They made me go and see some people guillotined, and I was ill for a week after. I once made a waistcoat for Louis XV., such a beauty! Those were good times, and I had plenty of money; there is no denying that those were good times. . . . . As for my wife," he added very low, "she always did love an execution; when any one was to be hung, she was the first to run. No good in locking her up, for she always managed to escape and be in time."

This woman was Alexandrine's worst trial. She came every evening, and with beaming delight expatiated on the horrors of the day while she ate her bread and rancid cheese. Alexandrine dared not try to silence her, nor to try to escape the recital. The quarrels of St. Jean and Cantal added to the poor child's discomfort; there were five people to feed, and St. Jean would not buy provisions nor Cantal cook them. Both cooking and eating took place in her room; Forêt was present from morning till night, and she could never go to her bed until he chose to go to his. Every day she carried food to the prison for her aunt, and often had to stand two hours or more at the door before a jailor could be bribed to take it in. Those who were too poor to pay were refused, or had the mortification of seeing the provisions which they had brought eaten before their eyes by the turnkeys!

Every one in Lyons was in equal peril. M. and

Madame de Bellecise were arrested, and Félicité had been summoned before Fouché, but her brave defence touched even him with admiration, and he dismissed her. For a while she lived disguised as a lingère, but finding a price was set on her head, she left Lyons disguised as a charcoal-burner, and reached Switzerland. Her health long suffered from the fatal day at Pierre Cise, but in time it was re-established, and she married happily.

It is a relief in this gloomy picture to hear of any one whose life did not end in exile or a violent death. The troubles of Alexandrine were but beginning. Day after day she stood in the heaving, anxious throng about the prison doors, one of more than two hundred women, all pressing to enter, or communicate with the captives. At length a packet of assignats induced a turnkey to admit her; she forced her way in, her basket was nearly overturned, her soup trickled over her dress, but what did she care, since she could pass a whole day with her aunt? The return home was sadder to her than any prison, for there were a pair of spies, two quarrelsome servants, and the knowledge that tears would be noted as a crime. Her only hope was to bribe some turnkey to let her into the prison, where fish-women and noble ladies were crowded with those of the worst character. Among them were a little English child with her nurse, imprisoned only because they were English; and these two were afterwards released. The prison was extremely unhealthy from dirt and its crowded condition, and no stove was allowed in it; Alexandrine used to

warm her aunt's soup on a wretched chaufferette, and attempted to make omelettes with eggs and spinach. White sugar no one could afford to buy; every other day bread was distributed to the prisoners, and fresh water might be had by those who could pay for it. Once a fortnight as much straw was given out to each prisoner as she could hold in both hands.

Mademoiselle des Écherolles had felt certain from the first that she should only leave her prison for the guillotine, but her good spirits never flagged, and her whole thought was for Alexandrine and her father; long afterwards, the niece whom she had loved so well, recalling those days, understood and marvelled at her resignation, her generous consideration for others, and her calm preparation for death. Deep indeed must have been the faith which could cheerfully trust those whom she loved to their God, and quit them at such a time without a murmur. She knew nothing whatever of the fate of her brother and nephews, but hoped they might be in Switzerland. As for Alexandrine, she must be left alone among enemies. It must have been a consolation to see that day by day the girl grew more self-controlled and able to cope with the difficulties around her, but yet what agonized prayers must have risen to Heaven for her from the poor aunt who always had a smile for her when they met!

Poverty was pressing hard on Alexandrine. Her property being under seal, she could not sell anything, and the servants were very unwilling to submit to any

privations. Once, when she had bought some common kind of oil for cooking, Forêt and the servants expressed loud discontent. "Did you always use the best oil in your own house, citizen?" asked Alexandrine, and the man was silent. Scarcely a night passed without domiciliary visits; on one occasion the soldiers burst in, furious at having been kept waiting a few moments, and flung open the curtains of the great bed where the girl slept. "Why, it's not a man!" they cried, astonished. "It's a child! What a little voice! what a miserable little mite!" and their laughter overwhelmed poor Alexandrine, who would answer nothing to all their questions about her father, and as soon as they were gone, sank down among her pillows trembling all over, exhausted, and in despair. It was well for her that she really did not know where her father was, and could not guess the extreme peril in which all this time he had been, hunted from refuge to refuge, now disguised as a miller, now as a vine-dresser. A message reached her at last. Forêt called to her as she returned sorrowfully from a vain attempt to see her aunt—"Your nurse has been here, waiting to see you." Alexandrine was just going to say that her nurse was dead, but changed it into, "Where is she?"—"If you make haste that way you might overtake her; she has a red bodice and a blue skirt, and her little girl is riding a donkey." Alexandrine was out of the house while he yet spoke, guessing that the supposed nurse had news for her. In fact, M. des Écherolles was in this woman's house, and,

most rashly, had sent for Alexandrine to tell him how her aunt fared, before he left France. To leave Lyons where her aunt was, seemed hard, but she obeyed his order, and in darkness and rain reached a village at the world's end, as she thought. "Go upstairs," some one said, and she obeyed, but stood at the door of an upper room dumb with surprise. A peasant girl was supporting a young woman who seemed to have just flung herself out of bed; her black hair swept the floor, a rosy colour flushed her cheeks, but her dark eyes were glazed: she was dying. An old man was holding a basin of water. A lamp on the ground threw a flickering light on this strange group, and Alexandrine recognized her father under the disguise of a labourer. Both he and the dying girl, as well as a third refugee, had been hidden by these good people. He and Alexandrine sat long by the fire below in sad talk, and she learned that this girl belonged to a noble family in Auvergne. A band of insurgents had seized her, and forced her to set fire, with her own hand, to the château of her uncle, and horror and terror had driven her mad. Her family were dispersed far and wide, and all that they could do for her was to place her among these kind peasants, where merciful death found her.

The woman who had sought Alexandrine, Mère Chozières, urged her going to rest, but the only room where she could sleep was that where Mademoiselle de Sauriac now lay dead. They did not tell Alexandrine how it was, perhaps thinking she would be frightened, but as soon

as they thought her asleep, began reciting the prayers for the dead, and then went away. Wearied out, she slept, even while shuddering at being thus left with the corpse, woke in terror thinking that it moved, and then slept again. Death seemed a blessed escape to her in those days from what was far worse, namely, life.

Alexandrine stayed for some days with these good peasants—days of rest and peace. Of an evening, neighbouring women would bring their distaffs and knitting to the stable, and sit or kneel on the straw, while Mère Chozières, who sat in dignity on a chair, worked, talked earnestly to them, or read aloud the life of some saint. The *veillée* always ended with prayer. In these days all religious practices were so entirely forbidden, that to do this required as much faith as even the early Christians needed, and Alexandrine had always reason to be thankful that her fading impressions of religion were so strongly revived at a time very critical for her. Père Chozières was not worthy of his wife or his admirable daughter Madeleine. He was willing enough to keep the fugitives, but he was a drunkard, and besides the constant danger of his talking too much, he heard revolutionary talk at his tavern, was laughed at for being henpecked, and would come home in a passion, and order his wife to turn her aristocrats out of doors. She would reply gently, and persuade him to wait, and in the end he always gave in. Once, however, she flashed into indignation, before which he cowered. He had returned very tipsy, but

evidently rather afraid of what he was going to say. "Wife," said he, suddenly, "Government has proclaimed that there is no such thing as Sunday; Décadi is to be the fête, so I shall work on Sundays and wear my white shirt on Décadis." For a moment Mère Chozières was speechless, but she speedily broke into holy anger. "So you fear men more than God!" she cried; "you blush for your religion! Do you not know that God made the world in six days? Sunday is the day of His rest, and you would not honour it? I know nothing of this Décadi—this feast of man's making. I only know the Lord's Day. As long as you live with me I will not hear of it. You will wear your white shirt and your best clothes on Sunday, and you will not work. I tell you, I will have no husband who is ashamed of his God. Choose between me and the wicked!"

The old man stirred the fire, growled to himself, and dared not meet her eyes. Presently he slipped away to his shoemaking, and no more was heard of him for some time. His daughter was a superior person, and her language and accent were so good that Alexandrine could only explain it by supposing that she had caught both from poor Mademoiselle de Sauriac, who even in delirium preserved the manners and language of a high-bred lady, and she had previously been well educated by a German who lived near, and who had hoped to marry her, until these miserable times shattered his plans. Refugees came and went, as they had done for months past, sometimes for a night, sometimes for a day, perhaps

for a much longer time. They were never sent away, and they greatly owed their safety to Madeleine's little sister Driette (Henriette), a gay, sensible little creature of nine years old, on whom many lives depended. She was always on the watch, and one day ran in exclaiming, "The mayor! the mayor!" A moment later, and he must have seen M. des Écherolles, who had barely time to throw himself on a bed and draw the curtains. Mère Chozières rose to meet the functionary, so that he turned his back to the bed; Alexandrine also came forward, and joined in inquiring after his wife and his affairs, while Driette signed to M. des Écherolles to steal out. As soon as he had glided away, Driette began to sing, and the two women sat down; the mayor glanced about suspiciously, but saw no one. Mère Chozières perceived that he was dissatisfied, and leading the conversation to her rooms and furniture, contrived to take him over the house, and he went away contented with having paid a domiciliary visit, as he thought, unsuspected.

The constant sound of artillery in the distance told of unceasing executions, for death was dealt out thus as much as by the guillotine. Those who were not fatally wounded were flung into the Rhone. At the sound, M. des Écherolles hung his head and muttered, "Their turn to-day—mine to-morrow!" He felt that he ought not to endanger the good family who had risked their

es for him longer, and set out for the Swiss frontier,

a three companions in misfortune, at midnight, while

Alexandrine, too sad for tears, quitted them at dawn. They made her take back a basket of eggs, meat, and butter, and, escorted by Madeleine, she returned in a boat to Lyons, full of impatience to see her aunt and give news of her father. Happily, the orders for that day were unusually mild, and the jailors, fancying from her absence that she had been ill, were compassionate, and let both herself and Madeleine pass. Mademoiselle des Écherolles had found these days without news very long, and several times she had been assured that her brother was arrested. She received Madeleine with warm gratitude, but the girl could hardly speak or listen, so aghast was she at the state of the prison, its misery, its horrors, and the mixtures of innocent and guilty, high and low. They talked over the provisions which the good Chozières had sent, but with extreme caution, knowing that there were spies all round. Evening came, and Madeleine had to return to her home, and Alexandrine to hers, where were Forêt and his wife; Forêt in the arm-chair, which even this virago could not make him give up, and the wife, as usual, discoursing on executions, and the doings of her son, and the dress of her *fillâtre*. Alexandrine was not a little surprised to find Forêt studying a book of Hours, in large print, belonging to her aunt; she ventured thenceforward to read a prayer for peace every evening, an act which was enough to have led her to the scaffold; but God's hand was over the poor desolate child, who had now not a friend left in Lyons who was not in prison or under

arrest, and instead of denouncing her, both Forêt and his wife used to join their hands and listen devoutly.

It was not wonderful if amid all these troubles Alexandrine fell ill. While she lay in bed she saw through her half-closed curtains the son of old Forêt enter. He wore the bonnet rouge, and she heard him say, "Father, if thou wert not a good Republican—if I could suspect thee of being an aristocrat, I would have thee beheaded to-morrow!"—"Ah, my son, my son, that's hard," remonstrated the old man, in a quavering voice; "it is too hard, my son." "Hard! how so? Learn that a true Republican has neither father nor family; he knows only the Republic, he loves nothing but the Republic; he sacrifices everything to it, and the sooner the better!"

Père Forêt shook all that evening after this visit from his affectionate son.

A note, weighty with peril, reached Alexandrine from Chambolle, telling her that he had been recognized, but escaped by swimming the Rhone, and was trying to reach Switzerland. She found thus much comfort in her illness, that she could cry unseen behind her curtains.

The first time that she returned to Les Récluses she was stopped by a sentinel because she had forgotten to put a tricolour cockade on, but he let her pass on condition that she bought one at the nearest shop. At the Récluses on this day only one visitor was admitted every half hour, and Alexandrine could scarcely stand

from weakness and distress. Fortunately, a turnkey recognized her, and called out, "See here, this little citizen is ill; she can't wait, she will faint; come, let her see her aunt." And she passed in rejoicing. Among the new captives whom she noticed was Chinard, the sculptor; he was modelling likenesses of his fellow-prisoners, and later, owed his liberty to a statuette of Reason being found in his cell, which was accepted as a voucher for his patriotism, though one of his accusers tried to turn it most unkindly to his destruction by taxing him with having rendered Liberty ridiculous by a bad statue. The prison was inspected by another artist, the terrible Marino, who had deserted painting on porcelain to become a member of the Temporary Commission. He came unexpectedly, while Alexandrine was trying to beat up an omelet. A jailor rushed in to warn all who had not special permission to enter the prison to escape. There was a general flight, Alexandrine alone remaining, determined to finish her cooking. "How many are there here?" asked Marino, at the door. "Fifteen." He did not count, luckily for her, but examined the baskets of provisions. "Let the rich feed the poor," said he, in his harsh voice, and added, to the peasant woman whom Mademoiselle des Écherolles paid for some trifling daily services, "If thou hast any complaint to make against these nobles, speak."

From this time it became necessary to have permission to enter from Marino himself. Crowds of suppliants

besieged his door; for three days did Alexandrine stand among them from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. She saw an officer who wanted a visa for a passport urgently, and was unable to gain admittance. He was walking up and down, exclaiming, "This is mere mockery of citizens; the *ci-devant* tyrant never kept one waiting like this!" At last Marino himself appeared, and shouted, "If you come for permits, know that nobody shall have one who cannot show a doctor's certificate that the prisoner is ill, and if he gives it out of base compassion, both he and the bearer shall be imprisoned, and the prisoner guillotined."

The crowd melted silently away, Marino's voice pursuing them with language not fit to record, one lady alone lingering to implore his mercy. He asked her name; she gave it. "What, you dare to utter here the name of a traitor! Out with you!" and hand and foot enforced the command. Just then St. Jean, or Marigni, as he was now called—as the name of St. Jean was forbidden—full of bustling importance, called out, "Citizen, pray attend to that little citoyenne yonder." Alexandrine shivered with fear at this untimely address. "Who are you, so ready to speak?" asked Marino. "I came with the little citoyenne, that she might not be alone," replied St. Jean, getting frightened. "Learn, then, that she is under the ægis of law and justice. Children take care of children here, and nobody has a right to protect any one. Out with you!" St. Jean hesitated. "Out! I say," and, seizing him by the

arm, Marino pushed him out. Alexandrine stood still. Marino seemed surprised, came up, and asked if she had a certificate; then spoke gently enough, and, bidding her wait, withdrew into his bureau. Scarcely was he gone when the irrepressible St. Jean put his head in. "What *are* you thinking of? You will compromise me; you will destroy me!" cried Alexandrine. "I am cold, I shall not stand on the stairs; I want to come here," returned St. Jean, whose vanity was hurt. She could hardly send him away before Marino returned, saying that she must come to his house the next morning; and she did not fail to obey, and obtained her permit, after much difficulty in gaining admittance to Marino, for the recent death of Marat had inspired great suspicion, even of mere children.

Alas! she found her aunt on the point of being removed to another prison, and the jailor of Les Récluses had confiscated the few comforts which she possessed as his perquisites. For five days the aunt and niece had not met, and only Alexandrine's pertinacity secured the new permit now necessary. There was again a stormy encounter with Marino; again she waited till the last, and he exclaimed, "You again! what do you want now?"—"Ah, citoyen," she said, hurrying through her tale, "I have waited here three days, have pity on me!" He hastily wrote a fresh permission—"There, run off!" and she obeyed most willingly. But this transfer to the prison of St. Joseph was a new step on the road to death, and Mademoiselle des Écherolles knew

it well, and her chief thought now was how to get Alexandrine out of Lyons. Alexandrine was thrown into despair by this plan; her only desire now was to be as long as possible with her aunt, and she was too young to understand the dangers that she ran in her unprotected state, or why mothers would not let their daughters come to the prisons. Lyons became more full of danger every day. Thirty-two persons were brought there from Moulins, and perished together. The Place Bellecourt, which Alexandrine had to cross whenever she visited her aunt, was in ruins, and the Lyonnais were taxed for the expenses of its demolition, which was part of the punishment adjudged to the city. Here stood the guillotine, and the ground was crimsoned with the blood of its victims. More than once Alexandrine was unable to escape the sight of an execution.

St. Joseph was more wretched than even Les Récluses. One night wild cries rang through the building; there was a universal panic, and the jailor, rushing in, found a room full of women suffocating from the fumes of charcoal in their little stove, which could not escape in the fetid and heavy air. They were carried into a courtyard, and revived. "A little air, a little water was enough," said Mademoiselle des Écherolles, the next day. "One wants but little here below, after all!" She was confined with fourteen other ladies in a room without a window, and no fire; the ceiling was entirely covered by a dense web, spun during many years by

innumerable spiders. By day the prisoners were allowed to walk in a great walled courtyard, where Alexandrine could talk unobserved with her aunt, and there was the great comfort of being admitted without difficulty. What was her dismay when, instead of finding her, she was told, "the citoyenne is not here; she is at the Hôtel de Ville."

The Hôtel de Ville! Only those who lived then could imagine how dreadful that name was. There sat the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the great vaults were thronged by prisoners, who passed out to die. Alexandrine hurried there. Moments were precious now. She saw her aunt once more; there were speechless embraces, stifled tears, broken words; all around were like scenes. How many such agonized partings had already taken place on this spot! Mademoiselle des Écherolles had already appeared before her judges, and had been reproached for "fanaticism," a little book of prayers having been found in her pocket; for "influencing her brother, and favouring the rebellion of Lyons." She was dismissed for the moment, but it was evident that her fate was sealed. Prisoners went in and out perpetually, called before the Tribunal. Chinard was among them; Alexandrine saw him walking up and down in great agitation, and muttering, "Shall I be free? shall I cross this threshold? shall I live, or return here to die?"—and he gazed out across the square, at the end of which stood the guillotine, and then resumed his hurried walk, too agitated to notice that he con-

stantly knocked against his fellow-prisoners. Among the women were a happy few who had had private information that they would be acquitted; their joyful faces contrasted startlingly with those of the others. Mademoiselle des Écherolles was not one of this happy number. "I know that many women are to die this decade," she said, calmly, "and I shall be one." Alexandrine would not, could not believe it. Her aunt was resigned and calm, but she gazed at the child whom she was about to leave with heartrending love and anxiety. Alexandrine never could recall what passed between them; agony left it blank. "My memory cannot call back what she said," she wrote long afterwards; "at such a time one says so little!"

Alexandrine was not allowed to remain long. "You will come back and bring my dinner?" said Mademoiselle des Écherolles, standing at the door, and following Alexandrine with her sweet, sad gaze. They embraced for the last time, for as Alexandrine passed out, a jailor took her permit and tore it up, saying, "No more going there for thee."—"Oh, let me go back and stay—stay altogether!" She implored in vain. She was pushed out, and went home stupefied with grief. St. Jean went out to learn who were to be released; he came back, and would not tell their names, and Alexandrine knew that her dear one was not among them. The world seemed to have come to an end for her.

Madame de Bellecise sent to beg her to visit her. She was under surveillance in her house, but her married

daughter had been set free; she was happy, while Mademoiselle des Écherolles . . . . "No, no, I cannot, I cannot," exclaimed Alexandrine in a passion of despair, and feeling as if she hated mother and daughter. A kind voice spoke: Madame de Bellecise had obtained leave to go to the desolate girl, and even in her anguish she was soothed by the serene old face, with its venerable white hair, and tender voice. She made Alexandrine go with her, and Madame Melanès, just given back to her mother, wept over the poor child and tried to give her a little hope; but how could she give another what she had not got herself? They did more, for they sent a servant with her to every one who could interfere in behalf of Mademoiselle des Écherolles. No one was allowed to approach the authorities with petitions, but a great crowd thronged the court of the Hôtel where lived Parcin, now President of the Tribunal, formerly a shoemaker. A man was seen going down a staircase. "Is it Parcin?" asked several voices. "No," answered a man who was keeping the crowd back. "Yes, yes, it is Parcin," whispered the maid with Alexandrine; "run quick—speak to him!"

He had walked on so fast that she could scarcely overtake him. She clasped his arm, and stammered out breathless, "She is not guilty; they must have taken her for another. Let her be questioned again! Give her back, oh, give her back to me! she is my second mother, all I have left. She is innocent—oh, give her back!"

Tears choked her. Parcin strode on impassible, never so much as looking at her. "I shall see," he answered; and when she again implored him to listen, he shook her off and went on. She went from one person to another, repulsed and laughed at everywhere. "Are you crying for a lover?" asked one. "Bah! you will soon find another." One man was an old friend of her father's, and had often been a guest at Écherolles. Alexandrine learned later that he was the very one who had insisted on signing her aunt's death-warrant when the other judges would have spared her, saying that "the soil of the Republic must be purged of such a monster of aristocracy." She tried to see the judges going to the Tribunal, but they had a private entrance. A stranger signed to her as she stood watching, and silently put an étui and a knife into her hand. She recognized them as her aunt's, kissed them, and implored him to take a last message from her child, but never knew if it reached her. All that long morning she wandered round the Hôtel de Ville, watching wildly for her aunt, calling for her, and then dreading lest her voice should penetrate those walls and add to Mademoiselle des Écherolles' distress. People asked who this frantic child could be, what could have happened to her. She knew that much, and then reason seemed to fail her, and she was only conscious that some one was taking her away.

At three o'clock that afternoon some one knocked and left a note for her. It was from Mademoiselle des

Écherolles, written just before her execution. It ran thus:—"I send you a kiss, my dear, good child. My note of yesterday never reached you; take care of your health, and that of your two friends. Thanks for the coffee; I have just had some. I think you had better go and see your sister. Ask for nothing, send me very little; all is to be Cantal's and Marigni's. I kiss you with all my heart; it is the only way in which I can hope to do so now. I have asked to be examined again. Do take care of your health, for the sake of an aunt who loves you, and prays for your happiness, and that she may see you again. Do not ask leave to see me again. Much love to our neighbours; try to interest them in your fate. Adieu, my dear little girl. I send you a snuff-box (you can send it back to-morrow at dinner-time) and the little case, and some other trifles. I have another snuff-box for to-day, and need nothing. I only wish that I could pay what I owe you. I am well." The hand that had so lately written these lines was now cold in death. They were directed to Cantal, and written on a leaf torn from some old book; the dangers of the times forbade a warmer or fuller outpouring, but to Alexandrine every word was weighty, and she read in each the unmurmuring resignation and the love which filled her aunt's heart to the last. The snuff-box and other trifles, which would have been so inestimable to Alexandrine, she never received.

As she sat in blind, dumb despair that evening, she heard some one sobbing near her, and, roused by the

only sound that could have moved her, perceived Madame de Bellecise, who had again sought her, and wept without trying to comfort the poor girl, whose tears seemed dried up. She was alone in the world; the fate of her father and brother was unknown to her, and the aunt who had long been as truly dear to her as a mother had perished by a violent death. Later, she was able to learn some particulars of those last moments. A priest, also under sentence of death, was amongst the captives of the Hôtel de Ville, heard their confessions, and passed the night before the execution in prayers with them. They went calm and resigned to their death; Mademoiselle des Écherolles was the first to die, and the priest the last.

While Alexandrine sat again alone in her desolation, Forêt ushered in a National Guard, and retired respectfully. Lifting her heavy eyes, she recognized a M. Alexandre, one of the companions of her father's flight. Her astonishment made her shake off her torpor. "You! And where is my father?" she exclaimed.

"I am not sure. We were stopped at the frontier . . . your father bribed our keepers with his watch, we escaped through a window . . . . . He has gone on alone . . . . I promised the good Chozières before I did the same to learn if you wanted any bread."

"I want nothing. My aunt ceased to live yesterday."

"Ah! And what will become of you?"

"I shall await my fate; there are to be domiciliary visits to-night, and I am to be arrested."

"How so?" he asked, startled; and she continued, with the same dull indifference,—

"Yes, I have been warned. The prisons are getting empty, and must be filled."

"And you mean to stay here?—Yes?—you mean to wait here quietly—you mean that? . . . . No, come with me, I will take you to Mère Chozières."

"I had rather die," she answered.

He remonstrated vehemently, urging her, in the name of her aunt and father, to escape, but he spoke in vain, until he declared that unless she would follow him he would remain too. Then she rose wearily, saying, "I must go then, for I have no right to throw away your life. Here Cantal entered, and he said briefly, "I am going to take your mistress away," on which the maid burst into tears, exclaiming, "What! take her away? and what will become of us? They will come to arrest her, and not find her, and then we shall be imprisoned —oh, do leave her!"

M. Alexandre stared at her in blank astonishment, which soon turned into indignation. "What! is that your notion, wretched creature? What! the last of your master's family, the only one left, you would sacrifice her; you who ought to think yourself happy if you could give your life to save her! You are unworthy to die for her!"

Cantal was so surprised by this view of the case that she ceased to weep, and stood open-mouthed. M. Alexandre then told Forêt that as a Garde Nationale

he had a right to take Alexandrine ; Forêt, completely deceived, bowed humbly, and they passed out, and went, protected by the disguise of M. Alexandre, through the gates unquestioned and into the open country, while thick fine rain fell, and night came on. Happily her guide knew the way well, though they went on in the deepest darkness, and conducted her safely to the cottage where he had first seen her on the night of Mademoiselle de Sauriac's death. She found herself placed by the hospitable hearth again, and tenderly cared for. " Good-night ! " he said, when reviving a little she tried to thank him, "*à demain.*" But when she awoke the next morning he had continued his flight, and she never heard of him again.

No search was made for Alexandrine. The soldiers who came to arrest her were satisfied on being told that a National Guard had already taken her away, and the prisons were again so full that no one knew who was arrested and who not. She spent three weeks with the Chozières, who were very tender and respectful to her, and would hardly sit down to eat with her, but the monotonous peace gave her full time to realize her sorrow, and she almost died of absolute heart-sickness. St. Jean and Cantal discovered where she was, and employed all means to prevent her flying further, and to make her return to her native place. Odille was there, unmolested, and the last wish of her aunt had been that she should go back, probably under the idea that her presence might prevent the estate being confis-

cated as the property of a refugee. The servants only thought that if she would return, they should not be responsible for her flight, if it should be discovered. She saw this, and resented it, but it was difficult for so young a girl to shake off the authority of servants who had seen her grow up. Her loneliness was terrible; she could not remain perpetually among the Chozières, and when St. Jean came to see her, bringing her the little dog which had been the pet of her father and aunt, and telling her that there was an opportunity of her returning to Lyons, she yielded, and found a temporary refuge with Madame Milanès, the daughter of old Madame de Bellecise. As she undressed at night Madame Milanès noticed a red ribbon round her neck; and asked what it was. "My father's Cross of St. Louis," she answered.

"Are you stark mad? Do you mean that you have worn it all along?"

"Certainly; I have only this cross left, and I mean to keep it."

"And when you visited the prisons?"

"I wore it. He bought it with his blood."

Madame de Milanès urged her to let the cross be hidden, for if it were found on her it would be a death-warrant, and she sorrowfully yielded, and hid also some valuable papers which she had always carried about her. She learned with joy that Félicité was safe, and prepared more cheerfully to go back to Écherolles, glad, at all events, to escape from the company of St. Jean

and Cantal, whose manners had become very insolent, like those of most servants. Cantal had taken possession of some of Mademoiselle des Écherolles' dresses, and refused to give them up, saying that Mademoiselle des Écherolles had given them to her, and there was nothing to be said.

Alexandrine returned to her home in May, 1794. There was no one to speak a word of welcome but her nurse in the desolate dwelling, and so painfully had the poor girl learned to distrust every one who in any degree favoured the revolution, that she doubted even this woman, who loved her, and had shown the most faithful affection to Odille, but who had in the early days of the outbreak sided in some measure with the republicans, though she was now violently opposed to them. Alexandrine dared not weep when she re-entered the home which she had left, a happy child, unconscious of the future, eighteen months before; she feared lest some spy might report her tears as want of patriotism, even when her idiot sister gazed at her and completed her loneliness by showing no recollection of her. All the house was under sequestration except the kitchen and a small garret, and she could not enter her mother's room. Her arrival was immediately reported to the Revolutionary Committee at Moulins, and a little ugly apothecary, one of its members, came at four o'clock A.M., the next day, to question her. After a long interrogatory, while the trembling nurse stood by, he said, "Listen attentively to what I am going to say,

and obey. Thou hast the misfortune of belonging to a family who are traitors to their country; thou must efface this stain, atone for thy crimes, and purify the impure blood in thy veins; thou canst only do this by working for the Nation. Work for our soldiers, and, above all, denounce traitors, and reveal their criminal designs . . . so wilt thou blot out the shame of thy name and serve the Republic."

The nurse insisted on sending at once for shirts to make for the soldiers, hoping to conciliate the authorities, but Alexandrine refused to touch them, and was much vexed at being dressed almost in rags, to excite a pity which she disdained. Her nurse understood the danger which she was in far better than she did, for there was a plan for shutting her up in a penitentiary with the worst women of the town, and it was only set aside through the influence of a M. Simard, who had once been doctor to the Des Écherolles. She remained under surveillance in her home, with the great shady garden to wander in, and the terrace which looked on the wild mountains of Auvergne. She had no books, for the seal of the nation was on her father's library, and want of occupation was weighing heavily upon her before she found that she could earn butter and eggs from the peasant women by embroidering muslin fichus for them.

Again she was in great danger when there was a proposal for a popular fête, with a tree of liberty, which was to be planted before the château. The nurse implored her to promise she would be present, assuring

her that it would be absolutely necessary. "I will not go," was all Alexandrine's answer; "they may drag me there, but willingly I shall never go, nor shall I dance round the tree, nor kiss it, nor sing." "Have pity on me," urged the nurse; "do not rouse their anger; it will cost your life." "I would rather lose it than degrade myself thus; I am not afraid to die." And convinced that she should be guillotined, she cut her hair short, to prevent the executioner from handling her. The nurse implored a former farmer of M. des Écherolles to interpose, which he did so effectually that the fête never took place.

The fall of Robespierre gave France breathing-time; there were fewer executions, and a general desire for peace began to appear. Without any visible change in Alexandrine's position, she perceived that compassion was taking the place of aversion towards her, but no one thought of restoring her property. One day while she sat in the garden, she heard her father's old farmers talking over together their chances of dividing his estate. Every one pitied her, and each said, "I want to keep nothing but my own farm."

All this time an old cousin of hers, a lady who had reached her eighty-fourth year, had been living unmolested on her estates, protected by her homme d'affaires, reading no papers, and knowing nothing of what was passing, until a peasant broke in upon her as she sat at dinner, and summoned her to marry him, as every one was now equal, and he had a right to marry whom he would.

When the old lady comprehended his intent, her fury knew no bounds. She rose up shrieking, "Marry me! I daresay, and a fine wedding I'll make it!" and fell upon him with her cane so vigorously, that the astonished wooer fled, stammering out excuses. It was not every heiress who escaped so easily as this ancient lady.

Somehow or other news of Alexandrine's desolate condition reached her, and she sent her homme d'affaires to ask whether, in consideration of her age and infirmities, she might have her little cousin to attend on her. The Committee reflected on the demand, and answered that Odille might go. This kind offer was declined, and after three days' hesitation Alexandrine was told that she would be free to visit Mademoiselle Melon, under condition that she should be sent back if wanted by the Committee. A feeling of indescribable surprise and joy filled Alexandrine when she heard that she still had some relation who could and would care for her, and she set out on her long journey upon a mare sent by the old lady, which was known as "*the nieces' mare.*" There seemed a promise of companionship in the very name. Her little dog, Coquette, followed her, and very nearly cost her Mademoiselle Melon's favour at first starting. The old lady was found at her toilet, seated on a low stool, while a maid crimped her hair, which was very white, and turned back off her face, leaving exposed large, ugly features, and a pair of great round eyes, which grew fierce as the little dog ran in, and lifting up her huge

hands, she cried shrilly, "Drive that beast out!" The maid suggested that it belonged to Alexandrine, who assented, trembling, already disconcerted by the cool "Good-morning, Mademoiselle des Écherolles," with which she had been received. "Ah, in that case let it alone," said Mademoiselle Melon more graciously. Alexandrine explained why it was dear to her, and the old lady melted into kindness, telling her always to bring it when she came to her room, and Alexandrine perceived how great a token of favour this was by the astonishment of M. Bonvent, the homme d'affaires.

She was established in the lonely bedroom "des nièces," on the ground floor of a separate house, where no one else slept. There was a bed with a paper top, grey curtains, edged with blue satin, a blue counterpane, a great yellow arm-chair, white walls, and a book-shelf containing a history of China in a dozen volumes. The solitude was frightful to Alexandrine, as it would have been to any girl of her age, but it was what Mademoiselle Melon condemned all her young visitors to, for this was "la chambre des nièces."

It was a strange life. The old lady was kind or harsh by turns, uncertain in temper, clever and eccentric; it was impossible to say what mood she might be in. Of course any allusion to the Revolution, little as she knew of it, made her furious. She breakfasted at nine o'clock, an hour well known to her favourite cats, five or six of which never failed to rush in mewing, with the greatest punctuality. Her dinner-hour was supposed to be noon,

but if she chanced to feel hungry earlier, she put on her watch and announced that it was midday, and as no one else was allowed to possess watch or clock, nobody could witness to the contrary, and she used to walk across the courtyard to her dining-room, scolding because dinner was not ready, and screaming back to the cook's shrill assurances from the kitchen that it could not yet be time, "Look at my watch." Sometimes she would make a tour of inspection, suspecting, and justly, that every one robbed her, including her homme d'affaires, whose affection for her did not prevent his appropriating the chief part of her revenues—and these visits to kitchen and pantries were sure to be followed by tempests of anger, before which every one fled. "What disorder! what extravagance!" she would cry, peeping into the saucepans, and knocking away with her cane the bits of wood that were carelessly strewn over the courtyard. "These people will ruin me!" Unfortunately, she made fierce war on trifles, and never saw the more important matters which needed reformation, like all born fidgets. Alexandrine greatly dreaded her visits to her room, for she always found fault with the want of order there; though, as there was only the drawer of a writing-table there to put all her clothes and other possessions in, the disorder was inevitable. The evenings seemed endless to Alexandrine, for she never was certain in what humour Mademoiselle Melon would be, and there were times when everything displeased her, and nothing that Alexandrine could do was right. Of course this uncertainty produced a painful

constraint, and the constant strain to keep in her cousin's good graces was both depressing and wearisome. When she came to Mademoiselle Melon's room, she found an arm-chair placed for her exactly opposite the fire, and she was never allowed to move it. There was no other light in the room. If Mademoiselle Melon were in a good humour, she would talk, and from her Alexandrine learned many family details which were precious to her, but she soon fell asleep, and Alexandrine could hardly endure the long hours of silence and idleness until she got leave to use a distaff. It was one of her fancies to economize in candles, and Alexandrine was never allowed one even in her own room. The doctors had forbidden Mademoiselle Melon to eat as much as her enormous appetite required, and she considered that she obeyed them by not going into the dining-room for supper, but having it served in her own room. Alexandrine supped with M. Bonvent, who too often came tipsy to that meal, but he was always respectful to the girl, and was conscious enough of his state to be anxious to say as little as possible. Mademoiselle Melon was secretly afraid of him, and while raging at him in private, never dared to scold him openly, but she would send angry messages to him by Alexandrine, who gave them very unwillingly, but did not venture quite to withhold them. Then M. Bonvent would fly into a passion, and Mademoiselle Melon, inquiring how he had received her reprimand, and gathering that he had not been sufficiently contrite, did the same. It was a

strange life indeed for a young girl, and the visits of a *prêtre assermenté* of worthless character, only embittered it. The servants feared that she would report their misdeeds, and the favourite maid was jealous of her, and certainly, had she chosen, she might have made curious revelations. Mademoiselle Melon had laid it down as a law that the supper for M. Bonvent should consist of one unvaried dish; M. Bonvent, on the other hand, threatened the cook with dismissal if she obeyed. Sometimes Mademoiselle Melon would question Alexandrine, to see whether her orders were obeyed. "What have you had for supper?" she would say. "A fricassee of chicken." "Indeed, chicken!" and the cook was summoned, and received with an outburst of wrath, to which she would reply calmly, "Mademoiselle Alexandrine is very absent, madam; she was thinking of other things, and fancied herself eating chicken." And Mademoiselle Melon, quite reassured, amused herself for a long time over Alexandrine's absence of mind.

The rare visits of neighbours always distressed Mademoiselle Melon, for as soon as one arrived, a nervous fear possessed her that he would stay too long, and presently she would feign to believe he was preparing to go, and assume lively regrets, exclaiming, "What, Monsieur, you are depriving me of your company already! Mademoiselle des Écherolles, run and see if the horses are ready; he will have to wait! run!" And the guest found himself dismissed. It may easily

be believed that visitors were few. Alexandrine found it hard to understand the mixture of despotism and kindness in this woman, who did not know what it was to be contradicted, and fancied everything advisable which she wished, simply because she wished it. Once, when Alexandrine, suffering from toothache, wished to have the offender pulled out, the old lady flew into a rage. "Toothache!" cried she, "I never have toothache. It must be your own fault, and as long as I live you shall never have one out." Undaunted, Alexandrine sent for a surgeon, but received the reply that he would not attend aristocrats.

The curé came daily. He tried to marry during the Revolution; but, as no one would accept him, he was obliged to rest satisfied with blessing the nuptials of a brother priest, a very pious man, as he said, to whom he felt that he could not refuse his ministry. He offered to lend Alexandrine books; but, frightened and disgusted by his manner to her, she refused, and begged for some from M. Bonvent, who answered kindly, "I have plenty, but none fit for you, except the lives of Turenne and Prince Eugene," and she gladly accepted these.

To her surprise, she received some money from her nurse, who had been made keeper of Écherolles, and sent her salary to her master's daughter. Another pleasant circumstance was a visit from a friend of her brother's, and she had news of her father through a Swiss, who came to see her, bringing a note from him

hidden in the lining of her dress. The little money which Alexandrine was able to send back never reached M. des Écherolles, and it turned out that this person had gone about collecting money from the families of many exiles, and had embezzled all. Happily, Alexandrine had not then received twenty-five louis, afterwards sent her by an old family friend, in whose care they had been left by Mademoiselle des Écherolles when she left Moulins, saying they were for the first member of her family who returned. From the very grave she seemed to stretch out a hand to help Alexandrine.

Life with Mademoiselle Melon was at length enlivened by the arrival of a pretty young cousin, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who could chatter like a girl, as well as work problems in algebra, and Alexandrine was enchanted to have her as a companion, even though Mademoiselle Melon laid down a law that they should not talk together in her presence. Though she was deaf, every now and then the sense of hearing returned in so sudden and treacherous a manner, that the girls did not dare transgress; moreover, they were obliged to sit at a considerable distance from each other. Having nothing else to occupy her mind, Mademoiselle Melon excelled in inventing small rules, and devising petty tyrannies, while fully persuaded that she was benevolence itself, and with so many good qualities as served thoroughly to deceive herself.

The two girls revolted at length against the dulness of their lives, and determined to celebrate Mademoiselle

Melon's name-day by a fête. They were happily occupied for some time beforehand in preparing; two MM. de Chalignis were let into the secret, and one of them was charged with amusing Mademoiselle Melon for a whole afternoon, that she might not perceive the girls' absence. From time to time she asked, "Where are the young ladies?" and he had to ward off her questions by redoubling his amiabilities. He was a special favourite, so that she did not feel her usual vehement desire to get rid of her visitor. "The young ladies" were putting on white dresses, and arranging the bon-bons and fruits which they intended to offer as gifts to Mademoiselle Melon. They had tried to drill all the servants into their parts in the intended drama, and, going into the kitchen to have a rehearsal, found a good peasant there who was instantly pressed into service, and made to represent Mademoiselle Melon. Making him a deep curtsey, they recited the verses composed by them in her honour, and he thought it Latin, and exclaimed, "How beautiful! only I do not understand a word of it!"

Jacques, Mademoiselle Melon's servant, entered and announced: "Mademoiselle, I come to say that a numerous party ask leave to see you."

"But, Jacques, Jacques, I never see any one, and you know it!"

"I told them so, but all they would say was that they should not stay long."

"I won't see them; it's dark; it's not a fit hour for visitors; send them away."

"But they are at the door, Mademoiselle!"

The girls were standing outside, stifling their laughter. They heard her rise, and ask anxiously, "Do you know them, Jacques?"

"No, Mademoiselle."

"So late, too!" she went on, in a despairing tone. "What can I give such a host for supper? Was there ever anything so annoying, M. de Chaligni? Do light the candles; make haste, you don't stir! what in the world are you about?" All the party entered, each bearing a little gift, and the servants singing a couplet composed by Alexandrine. Mademoiselle Melon stood aghast, not recognizing any one; the two girls advanced with a basket of bon-bons in one hand and a bouquet in the other, followed by the younger M. de Chaligni bearing a huge apple tart. They began reciting their verses, while Mademoiselle Melon stared more and more wildly, till they all burst out laughing, and, recognizing them at last, her anxieties about the supper vanished, and she relaxed into good-humoured satisfaction. The next day she wanted to hear again all about their preparations, and Alexandrine said, laughing, "You tried to take my basket, but I kept it till my verses were done."

"What verses?" asked she.

"Ah, superb verses! what a humiliation for us!"

"Verses?—verses? I never heard them. Well, say them now: it comes to the same thing." Her whole attention had been given to the cakes and fruits.

The following summer M. des Écherolles ventured to return, and both father and daughter went to his house at Moulins. In the cellar they found all their plate, hidden there by Mademoiselle des Écherolles, and they lived on the proceeds of its sale for several years. There was no rest for them at Moulins, for sometimes the royalists hoped that they had the upper hand, and revenged themselves on their enemies; and then again the Jacobins seized the power that was escaping them, and arrests and flight and terror began again. The Des Écherolles were forced to escape in the utmost haste from Moulins, and fled once more to Lyons, so full of miserable recollections. There they spent a most anxious and perilous time, and M. Des Écherolles was so weary of this constant hiding, that he could hardly be induced to take any precautions, and exclaimed, "Let them guillotine me; death is better than such a life!" He found it wiser to separate from Alexandrine, and sent her back to Écherolles, where she found her sister dying. Little as Odille could ever have been to her, this death left her more solitary than ever; but a ray of hope dawned on her when a sort of truce came, and her two brothers reappeared. It was of short duration: M. des Écherolles and his sons had to escape to Switzerland, and Écherolles was sold as "bien d'émigré."

Alexandrine returned to Mademoiselle Melon, who allowed her to visit friends of the name of Leblanc. Here she found herself amid noble dangers, which she joyfully shared, for their house had always been a refuge

for the persecuted priests, and many still came and went unknown to all but M. Leblanc and his daughter. They arrived at night, and went away in the same manner; and, the house being small, a constant watch and foresight was necessary. There was a little chapel belonging to it; here mass was secretly said, children baptized, and marriages celebrated. Sometimes visitors would arrive while a priest or two were walking in a little wood near—open air in itself was a delight to men who had hidden in secret places for weeks or months—and the signal that they might venture back to the house was always Alexandrine calling her dog Coquette, on which a grave personage, answering very ill to such a name, would emerge from among the trees.

The émigrés were gradually returning, and for a time all who bore a noble name felt so linked together by community of suffering, that differences of rank were forgotten, and a universal sympathy and readiness to help one another prevailed. Alexandrine had kind messages and invitations from old friends, and one of her brothers came unexpectedly to see her, and won Mademoiselle Melon's favour; and Alexandrine, with returning hope, began to think of something beyond mere existence, and became anxious to improve her neglected education. She resumed the study of Italian, of which a priest had taught her a little while she was with the Leblancs, and read with delight the only book which she possessed in that language—Young's

"Night Thoughts." This book enjoyed public favour at the time, and almost rivalled the poems of Ossian, which was an especial favourite amongst the French artists, who, far from questioning its authenticity, thought it one of the most *primitive* works in the world.

Alexandrine was driven away from the home which she had found with Mademoiselle Melon, by the plots of the servants, and she joined her father, now once more at Lyons. Her health was so feeble that she was believed to be consumptive, but poverty pressed so heavily on her family, that as soon as she felt somewhat stronger, she sought a situation as governess, no worse fitted for it, unhappily, than hundreds of other women who, like her, offer themselves at the age of eighteen as teachers, as the only means open to them of gaining a living. All hope of regaining Écherolles was lost through the folly of an old servant, who had kept the papers and bonds entrusted to her safe through all the most perilous time, and then burned them in a sudden panic. "Ah, Mademoiselle," she said, "I was very, very wrong; there was no longer any danger, but I got so frightened, and I spent two whole nights in burning them." M. des Écherolles and Martial found employment at Lyons, and while Alexandrine was absent with friends, she was astounded by receiving the news of her father's approaching marriage. Love seemed to be entirely on the lady's side, but M. des Écherolles was still a gay, light-hearted man, willing to be married to any one who was amiable

and had a little money. It was to make a home for Alexandrine, he said, and this stung her; she would much rather it had been for himself. But the matter was settled. An acquaintance of both parties came to M. des Écherolles to propose the match; the bridegroom elect answered in amazement, "Does the lady know that I have lost everything? That I have three children? That my salary is small? That I am a man of seventy?" Each question was answered in the affirmative. The lady had an uncomfortable home, and was resolved to escape from it.

Alexandrine, surprised and displeased, went to Lyons. Her father met her at the quay; she saw the kindly face smiling at her in the crowd, and was too glad to think of anything else until he said, "My wife is expecting you." Yes, he had a wife now! But she turned out to be unobjectionable, though Alexandrine at first stood dismayed at the sight of an odd, plump little person, with a great black and orange fichu on her head. She discovered very soon that bad dressing does not preclude kindheartedness, and felt happy about her father, but resolved to maintain herself. After trying an uncomfortable situation in Paris, as mistress of the household of an insane lady, she was most unexpectedly offered that of governess to the young daughters of the Duchess Louise of Wurtemburg. She accepted with many fears, but the Duchess had heard her story, and seen letters of hers which fully satisfied her that the little pupils would have a companion who was what she

desired for them, even if she were not an accomplished governess. Alexandrine found herself now in a peaceful harbour, where she was loved and esteemed, and whence she was never again driven. The storms of life were over for her, and their remembrances only now filled her with deep gratitude and peace.

ART AND ARTISTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

MADAME LEBRUN.

"Lebrun, de la beauté le peintre et le modèle,
Moderne Rosalba, mais plus brilliante qu'elle."

SO said La Harpe, in a séance of the French Academy, turning pointedly towards the object of his praises, and all present at once showed their concurrence in the eulogium by rising with one accord and applauding vehemently.

Yet who is now familiar with the name of Louise Vigée Lebrun, around whose cradle, as to the birth of a little princess in the kingdom of Art, gathered all the fairies? One endowed her with beauty, and another with wit; and the fairy, Grace, brought her a pencil and palette. It is true that the fairy, Marriage, who had not been invited, said, "Thou shalt marry M. Lebrun," but then, to console her, the fairy of Travel promised "to guide her from academy to academy, from Paris to St. Petersburg, from Rome to London, with her gaiety, her talent, and her easel, at which were to be painted all the sovereigns of Europe, and all heads crowned with genius."*

* Louis Blanc.

Before entering on the life of the once popular Court painter, who belonged to a school soon to pass away, and was a descendant of Watteau and Greuze, we must glance at the state of French Art at the end of the thirteenth century.

"The French school, the only one which exists, is still far from its decline," said Diderot, writing in 1765 to his friend Grimm. "All the works of all the artists and sculptors in Europe, if you could gather them into one place, would not equal our salon."

But if the connoisseur of the present day meets with a collection of works of art belonging to or immediately succeeding this date, his conclusion would be that if Diderot were right in his estimation of the French school, Art must have been at a very low ebb indeed in Europe. There is much mannerism, little love of Nature, for which painting was no longer the interpreter but the substitute; studying from the living model was becoming less and less common, and the favourite subjects of the most popular artists told how deep was the corruption of morals. Art had gradually become a State affair, and pictures were ordered nominally by the king, as an encouragement to artists, without any special destination, that alone was left vague, while price, size, and subject were carefully indicated, as little as possible being entrusted to the painter.

A great growth of mediocre artists was necessarily the result, but neither Louis Quinze nor his unhappy successor had any love of Art, and were content to believe

as they were told, that this system was the best that could be devised. Here and there a protest was uttered; here and there a painter showed some independence, but without founding any school or attaining popularity. Poussin and Le Sueur had lived and died unpopular; Vien had no weight with the public, but a pupil of Vien's was destined to found a new school, which, whatever its faults, at least freed Art in France from the trammels into which it had fallen, for he was the master of Louis David.

Not for many years, however, did David himself become free from them. He was brought up under the old system; he had learned all the cut-and-dried laws of that Academy which he was destined to abolish; it was long before he won its prize, which enabled him to study at Rome, and learn what was that antique Art which France despised so much, that the Academy considered it waste of time to draw from the dying gladiator, and he was for great part of his life, if not the whole, influenced by Boucher, in whom the degraded taste of the time was glaringly apparent. Opposed to him as David was in every respect, he yet admired him, and used to say to his pupils, "*N'est pas Boucher qui veut.*"

It is difficult to understand how David, "le roi du savant pinceau," as André Chenier calls him, could have forced himself to admire Boucher, so different are their styles, so unlike are Boucher's saints, his cupids, his shepherdesses, and his rosy, laughing children, to the

severe manner of David, and his devotion to classical subjects; but doubtless the rich and vivid colouring of this artist attracted him, as it did in the case of one far inferior, Valentin, a Frenchman by birth, but a pupil of Caravaggio's, and long resident at Rome, where David met with his works. Perhaps, too, his admiration for Boucher arose somewhat from wonder that he should have discovered such beauty in subjects that for himself had no attractions, just as in Italy David used to stand before those paintings whose subjects were taken from Scripture, lost in amazement that the Bible, in which he had no belief, could have been to others an abundant source of inspiration.

Boucher was a thorough Frenchman; Nature had no charms for him; he thought her greens hard and her lights not brilliant enough. The ancient masters attracted him even less, and when his pupil, Fragonard, went to Rome, having gained the first prize of the French Academy, Boucher's parting counsel was, "My dear Frago, if you follow Michel Angelo, and those sort of people, it is all over with you!" There was nothing of that "phantasy and flame" in Boucher which makes the man of genius. He belonged entirely to the era of Louis Quinze and the Regency, and was called, with as much justice as wit, "the Raphael of Madame de Pompadour."

At his death, in 1770, painting, which was reviving fast in England under the brush of Sir Joshua Reynolds, nsborough, and Wilson, had sunk lower than ever in

France, though Diderot and others had sought to kindle a purer flame by bringing truer principles of art before the public. A taste for art was too innate in the French nation for it ever to be entirely extinguished, but it grew more and more depraved. Even the charming painter Greuze could not quite escape the infection, though he was so much too moral for the taste of the time, that his exquisite paintings remained unpurchased in his atelier, while those of Boucher were eagerly bought up.

Historical painting, strictly so called, scarcely existed; landscapes, in spite of Loutherbourg and the Vernets, were not fashionable, and fashion was all-powerful. We feel how little real love of nature there was in France, when Diderot could say that he had to imagine a beautiful view to be a picture before it touched him. Yet Diderot was an excellent art critic, a man of genius, with a rich sensitive nature, seeking merits rather than faults in whatever he was studying, and the founder of art criticism in France. Place him before a picture of Vernet's, and he describes it like a poet;—place him before the same view on the sea-shore or the valley, he immediately begins to criticise, and is persuaded that an artist would have improved on it.

It is difficult to say whether this results from his atheism; there are passages in his "Salons de Peinture" which would lead us to believe so—passages full of a sadness, the deeper because he seems almost unconscious of it. The coarseness of the day no doubt

militated against a true love of anything perfectly pure and simple. Even the eloquent descriptions of Vernet's landscapes are often spoiled by some gratuitous suggestions forced in by the critic, and St. Beuve says of him with equal grace and justice, "When you see on his brow a gleam from the sunbeams of Plato, beware, look close: there is always the Satyr's foot peeping out."

The only schools of painting which could really be said to flourish were genre and portraits. Among the most pleasing of those who devoted themselves to the latter, was Louise Vigée Lebrun. Daughter of a painter, sister of a poet, though both mediocre, she had a decided taste for art. Sent for education to a convent at six years old, she was in constant disgrace for drawing on the copybooks and themes of her fellow-pupils as well as on her own, and even on the dormitory walls. The nuns were scandalized; not so the father, who delighted her by exclaiming on seeing some of her sketches, "Tu seras peintre, mon enfant, ou jamais il n'en sera." To her dying day she could recall the joy which those words gave her.

Her frail health caused her to be often sent home for change of air, and then she drew with her father's colours from morning to night, watched his sitters, and listened in mute rapture to the talk of the artists who came to his house. Her mother assumed the airs of a devotee, without impressing any real religious feeling on Louise, who was much less struck by Madame Vigée's

attending every Church ceremony than by her vexation at her daughter's pale, thin little face, deep-set eyes, and remarkably large brow, which promised intelligence rather than beauty. As yet there was no trace of the loveliness which afterwards made her the fashion as much as did her talent, and her pretty little brother, several years younger, was the mother's favourite. "She was a strict and pious woman," Louise wrote long afterwards in the memoirs which she published, "but not quite detached from the world."

M. Vigée, who was devotedly fond of Louise, died while she was very young, full of anxiety for her future and that of France. Words which she had overheard him utter on returning from a supper-party given by some of the Encyclopédists, long haunted her as a prophecy, "All that I have been hearing convinces me that ere long the world will be turned upside down."

This loss left the daughter much sadder than the widow, who sought in every way to console herself—not a difficult task—and to cheer Louise, which was a harder one. She wished her to resume the art which she had cast aside, too heartsick at the want of the dear father who had so prized her efforts, to care to paint, now that his eyes could see her no longer, but she was roused to interest by her visits to the Luxembourg, then adorned with some of Rubens' finest works, and later, converted into a gallery for the works of living artists by the Comte de Forbin, who, after being soldier, artist, and then soldier again, was appointed Director-General of

the Museums of France. Louise resumed her painting with enthusiasm, and, to stimulate her further, Madame Vigée sent her to take lessons from Briard, better known as a teacher than by his own paintings, and the pleasure of these lessons was increased by their being shared by a young friend, Mademoiselle Boquet, a girl of fifteen, one year older than Louise, and as fond of painting as herself. As yet there were few signs of the tempest soon to break upon unhappy France, and there is something very touching in the thought of the two bright young girls working together, and full of hope for the future, when we know that the fame of one placed her life in the utmost danger, and that the other perished in the storm. Mademoiselle Boquet married young, and was appointed to the office of concierge to one of the royal châteaux, by Marie Antoinette. This was remembered against her in the time so justly called the Reign of Terror, she was arrested and guillotined.

Evil days seemed far off when the two girls painted in Briard's atelier, and Joseph Vernet interested himself in Louise, giving her advice which deserves to be chronicled: "Follow no system too closely," he used to say; "study the great Italian, and Flemish painters, but, above all, study Nature; draw from Nature; there is no teacher equal to her."

Vernet practised what he preached, for he was never weary of studying Nature himself, and constantly took notes of every effect which struck him while out of doors, though he was so far a Frenchman that the wild

and rugged had no real charm for him in landscape, masterly though his painting of sea pieces was. Louise felt it a great honour to be encouraged by Vernet; she profited by his kind counsel, and copied several heads by Rembrandt and Vandyke with great care, studying especially light and shade, and she began to take portraits. M. Vigée had left no fortune, and she supported her mother and young brother by her work. The widow had no desire to remain long without a protector, and did not fail every Sunday to exhibit herself and Louise amongst the throng who sought the Tuileries gardens, for the plain, stooping child had blossomed into a pretty girl, and the mother herself was still handsome. In a short time Madame Vigée contracted a second marriage, but it did not add to the happiness of Louise, nor was her labour lightened, for her step-father, a rich jeweller, turned out ill-tempered and miserly, and appropriated every penny which she earned. She gained large sums, young as she was. The Duchesse de Chartes, daughter of the good Duc de Penthièvre, commissioned her to paint her portrait, and this set the fashion; all the great ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain followed her example, and so many of their worthless sons and husbands courted the pretty artist, that her position became very perilous. It was an epoch when morality was quite out of fashion, and fashion goes for so much in France! In after years she attributed her escape from these dangers first, to the good principles taught her by her father, and, secondly, to her never having

read any novels, except Richardson's "Clarissa Harlowe," which "interested her prodigiously." Neither then nor later was she a reader; her life was given to her art, and her memoirs, though written with ease, betray an unpractised author. She hardly ever spells a foreign name right; dates are omitted which are essential to a clear understanding of the narrative; she talked far better than she wrote. When Louis XVIII., who never could sing in tune, asked her, "How do you think I sing?" her ready answer was, "Like a Prince, Monseigneur." As for her admirers, she speedily devised an unexceptionable way of turning away too expressive looks. "I paint best when my sitters are quite at their ease, looking anywhere but at me," she would say; and the annoyance of the gentlemen used greatly to amuse her mother, who was always present at these sittings. So irreproachable was the girl's conduct, that on one occasion, when Philippe Égalité was talking over the ladies of Paris with his worthy companion, M. de Genlis, and each fair dame was branded with some bitter sarcasm, on the name of Louise Vigée being brought forward, his sole remark was, "There is nothing to say against her."

Soon after Madame Vigée's second marriage, her husband bought a country house at Chaillot, to the delight of Louise, who fancied the country to be fairyland. However, not only was she as true a Parisienne as that Marquise de Courcelles, who had a clause inserted in her marriage settlement conditioning that her husband should never

take her into the country, but this "campagne" turned out to be a parody of a cottage, small and uncomfortable, with a garden without a tree, and no shelter but an arbour, about which were planted beans and nasturtiums which never grew. Small as the garden was, three parts of it were let out to shop-boys, who came every Sunday to shoot small birds, terrifying Louise by their noise and want of skill. Her great pleasure was to visit the stately gardens of Marly le Roi, "that fairy palace, unique in Europe," as St. Simon called it, with its fine trees, its fountains, cascades, and swans. There she once met Marie Antoinette and some of her ladies, in those simple white dresses brought into fashion by the costume of Virginia, when Bernardin de St. Pierre's tale of "Paul et Virginie" was dramatized. Louise was about to withdraw in haste, when the queen, with the charming graciousness for which she was famed, stopped and bade her walk all over the grounds if she liked. This was the beginning of her passionate admiration of the queen. When in 1802 Madame Lebrun returned from exile, she hastened to revisit Marly. Not a trace was left of those stately gardens, of fountains, or palace; only a single stone remained where the chief hall had been.

The popularity of Louise increased daily; great ladies not only came to be painted by her, but eagerly sought to have her at their parties. Devoted to her art as she was, it was difficult to find time for dining out; and she finally resolved to accept only supper

invitations. Her resolution was confirmed by a disaster, which she relates with comic gravity in her memoirs. Having a few minutes to spare before going to a very grand party, she bethought herself of adding a touch or two to a portrait then on her easel, and sat down to contemplate it, unaware that she had laid her palette on the chair. "The consequences were such," she used to say, "that I felt my art to be incompatible with the amusement of dining out."

In 1775 she painted the likenesses of Fleury and La Bruyère, from engravings, and presented them to the Academy, which sent her a gracious letter of thanks by its secretary, d'Alembert, and a ticket of free admission to all its public meetings. It was shortly after this honour that the discomfort of her home, and her mother's urgent persuasions, induced her to marry M. Lebrun. She was then about twenty years old, and her own feelings were rather against than for this marriage, which indeed turned out unfortunate enough, for Lebrun, who was an engraver and picture-dealer, looked on her almost as a speculation, was immoral and extravagant, and spent her money as fast as she gained it. Madame Lebrun was all her life as simple as a child about money. She was nobly paid for her pictures, and between the time of her marriage, about 1775, and her flight from France in 1789, she had painted nearly four hundred portraits; yet so completely had she abandoned her earnings to her worthless husband, that had not a sum of one hundred pounds been accidentally paid to her

instead of to him, she would not have had twenty francs to pay her journey with.

For a little while her marriage was kept secret, M. Lebrun having promised to marry the daughter of a Dutchman, with whom he was carrying on a large trade in pictures, and fearing to affront him until their business together was settled! A report of her engagement, however, got abroad, and one friend after another hurried to warn Louise what kind of man Lebrun was. But it was too late, and only served to fill her mother with terror and self-reproach. As for Louise, she was still almost a child in character, and enjoyed life to the full, caring too little for her husband to lament his indifference towards her, finding hard work only make her leisure hours more intensely enjoyable, and radiant with strength and gaiety. M. Lebrun, always greedy for more profit, proposed that she should take pupils, but this proved a failure; the merry girl could not keep order. One day, on entering her atelier, she found that her pupils (all older than herself) had put up a rope, and were swinging each other. Louise stood indignant, lectured sternly on their frivolity, their waste of time—then, suddenly forgetting her part, was seized with a desire to try the swing, and became the merriest of all.

The birth of a daughter made her very happy, though she had realized the approaching event so little, that she had made no preparations for it, and on the very day of the child's birth, absolutely refused to believe such an event possible. "It would be too inconvenient!" she

repeated, while she worked at her "Venus binding the wings of Love." The old friend to whom she made this declaration, while she stood absorbed at her easel, was half-amused, half angry. "*Vous êtes un vrai garçon!*" said she. "*Je vous dis que vous accoucherez ce soir!*" And at ten o'clock the infant was born.

This picture, with its mythological group, shows not only that Madame Lebrun did not confine herself to portraits, but that she was touched by the strong love of classical subjects which always prevailed among French artists. Long before the passion for Greek and Roman manners and customs pervaded Paris, and before it was the fashion to sit in curule chairs, and attempt to introduce a classic costume, every exhibition overflowed with subjects taken from ancient history or fable. Here and there might be a Magdalen, or a Saint, or a gorgeous pile of fruit and glittering vases by Chardin, the Lance of that day, or a modest picture of still life, by some female artist; but the greatest number were classical, even before men's minds became full of the ancient republics. Augustus closing the Temple of Janus; Atalanta dropping golden apples hung beside Helen and Paris; a Psyche abandoned; or Psammetichus pouring a libation to Vulcan from his helmet. "Gods without power, satyrs without rusticity, nymphs without innocence, men without humanity," were given to the public by artists [illegible] had no belief in any of them, and repeated them as [illegible] of tradition.

[illegible] therefore, did not create this national taste, but

he put a new life into it by making his classical subjects represent the feelings of the day. It was blindly fostered by Government, and M. d'Angivilliers, whose part it was to order pictures and statues for the State, directed David to paint that famous picture of "Les Horaces," afterwards presented, under very different circumstances, by the artist to the nation.

Although she indulged in a few of the favourite mythological subjects, as we have said, portrait-painting was Madame Lebrun's true vocation, and the history of her sitters would almost be a history of the Revolution. Many, very many, of those aristocratic heads were destined to fall under the axe of the guillotine. One, to whom a touching interest attaches, was Pauline de Montmorin; another, whose very name raises a smile in any one familiar with the memoirs of the time, was that portly Duchesse de Mazarin, of whom some wit said she had had three fairy god-mothers, Richesse, Beauté, and Guignon. Madame de Mazarin was descended from the gipsy-niece of Cardinal Mazarin, Hortense Maucini; she was immensely rich, and all Paris visited her, courted her, and laughed at her. It might almost have seemed that, with her Italian blood, she had inherited the dreaded gift of the evil eye, so ill did anything with which she had to do turn out. No one could forget her brilliant idea of making that famous pie of nursery celebrity, whence the four-and-twenty blackbirds emerged into a fact, only that she tripled the number, had the pie dexterously opened, and

possibly hoped that the birds would perform their part; but instead of this, the frightened creatures flew wildly about, perching on the curled and powdered heads of the guests, or dashing in their faces, till even the studied politeness of the day gave way. Even less happy was her fête villageoise, when a dozen sheep, well washed, soaped, and ribboned, were to be driven by a valet dressed as a shepherd (d'opéra, of course), and a lady's maid, costumed as a shepherdess, into the midst of the dancers. Unfortunately, some one recollected that a dog was indispensable to a flock; the omission was immediately repaired by the introduction of the house-dog, who, it seems, did not comprehend that his duty, on this occasion, was to make himself agreeable, and uttered so fierce a growl that the sheep rushed pell-mell out of the room where they had been shut up, into the midst of the great ball-room, where the Duchess, dressed like a shepherdess of Sèvres china, was expecting them to appear in a discreet and pastoral manner. Laughter, shrieks, "confusion worse confounded" ensued; the sheep ran wildly among the dancers; the dancers ran away from the sheep; the house-dog dashed among them, and the ram, whose courage alone remained unshaken, instead of discreetly leading his flock, rushed at his own image in the mirrors. Paris never forgot that fête villageoise.

Very different are the feelings that awake at the name of Pauline de Montmorin, she whose mother

stood in tears while the deputies of the States-General passed by, and answered the reproaches of Madame Necker by sad and prophetic words. Almost every member of her family perished in the Revolution; Pauline escaped with great difficulty, reached England in an open boat, and for a time found a shelter at Juniper Hall, near Dorking, whose grand old cedars sheltered a brilliant group of exiles; Madame de Staël, Talleyrand, and others known to fame. Thence she went to die at Rome, where Chateaubriand gave her a monument and an epitaph, briefly telling the events which had "driven her to die of heart-sickness in a foreign land." But he does not record, what the Romans have not forgotten, that during the short time that she lingered there, she made herself so beloved by her charity, that by general desire hers was a true Roman funeral; she was borne to her rest strewn with flowers and with uncovered face, and all the Southern horror of death could not prevent a great assemblage gathering to honour the gentle stranger.

In 1779 Madame Lebrun had the honour of painting Marie Antoinette, and her artistic description gives a charming idea of the queen. Never, in any other woman, she used to declare, did she see so radiant a complexion; there actually was no colour which could give the idea of that clear, rosy skin. This picture, in which Marie Antoinette was painted holding a rose, gave such satisfaction, that Madame Lebrun was ordered to paint it twice. The first was destined for Joseph II.

of Austria, the other for the Empress of Russia, and thus Madame Lebrun became known at St. Petersburg. Madame Campan considers that Marie Antoinette's likeness was never well taken except by Werthmuller and Madame Lebrun. Marie Antoinette submitted to the necessity of having her portrait taken, but she was unable to judge of an artist's merit, and when she went to an exhibition of pictures, she merely gave a hasty glance at those which depicted still life, and passed all others without a look. She had, however, a personal liking for Madame Lebrun, who painted several other portraits of her, one of which represented her in a tight-fitting muslin dress. It was exhibited, and the story ran, that the queen had been painted in her chemise, for by 1786 nothing that Marie Antoinette could do escaped calumny. Madame Lebrun bitterly felt this accusation of impropriety, and in her memoirs she dwells long and mournfully on the extreme kindness shown her by the queen, whose stateliness and noble bearing contrasted charmingly with her gracious manner. On one occasion, owing to illness, Madame Lebrun missed an appointment at Versailles ; she hastened the next day to make her excuses, and found the royal carriage in the courtyard, and M. Campan very indignant. "It was yesterday, Madame," he said in his stentorian voice and stiffest manner—"yesterday that the queen expected you ; she is certainly going out to-day ; she certainly will not give you a sitting." Poor Madame Lebrun tremblingly assured him that she only

came to apologize, and was conducted to the queen, who was dressing, while the little Madame Royale repeated a lesson to her. Turning gently to the delinquent, Maire Antoinette said, "I expected you all yesterday morning; what happened to you?"

"Alas! Madame, I was too ill to come, I am only here to receive your orders; I will go at once."

"No, no; you shall not have come all this way for nothing," was the queen's answer, and she sent away her carriage and prepared for the sitting.

Still nervous, Madame Lebrun dropped her colour-box and brushes; she was stooping to pick them up, when Maria Antoinette hastily prevented her.

"Stop, stop!" she exclaimed, "it might hurt you to stoop now," and she picked them all up herself.

How much courageous kindness there was in this act of the queen's those will understand who know what was then the terrible strictness of etiquette of the French Court.

When the Dauphin died in 1789, Marie Antoinette could not bear to see the picture in which he appeared with her and his sister, and had it removed from the hall at Versailles where it was hung, but, ever mindful of the feelings of others, she immediately sent to tell Madame Lebrun why it was taken away, lest she should imagine that it had not given satisfaction.

It is rarely that poor Louis XVI. said a graceful thing, but when he first saw this charming picture, he sent for Madame Lebrun to tell her how much he liked it,

adding, "I know nothing of painting, but you teach me to love it."

This picture was hung in the salon of 1785 below "Le Serment des Horaces" of David. Later events caused a sad analogy to be perceived between Madame Lebrun's portrait of Marie Antoinette surrounded by her children, and that by Vandyke, where the family of Charles I. appear grouped around their parents.

A little later, she painted portraits of Madame Elizabeth, and the Princess de Lamballe; the dreadful end of the latter haunted her all her life.

A journey to Flanders, in 1782, with M. Lebrun, gave her the opportunity of seeing and studying many famous pictures, amongst others the *Chapeau de paille* of Rubens, now in England. She came back to find herself more the fashion than ever; the greatest nobles came to her soirée, sitting on the ground when chairs failed, whence the fat old Maréchal de Noailles used to find it extremly difficult to rise.

Naturally, artists were numerous in her salon. David often came, for he was a true admirer of talent wherever he met with it; but there was an instinctive antipathy between the ultra-republican and the Court painter, and he ceased to visit her on the plea that she was too fashionable, and loved aristocrats. "Ah," was her retort, "you bear the aristocracy a grudge, because you are neither duke nor marquis; now to me, titles are matters of indifference, and I am glad to see any one if only he is agreeable."

They met in after days, and had another sharp encounter; but David appeared no more in her salon. His annoyance at this severe reply did not blind him to her merits as an artist. "One would think that painting of hers done by a man, and mine by a woman!" he said long afterwards, as he stood in an exhibition of pictures in the Louvre, looking from a portrait by himself, which did not satisfy him, to the fine likeness of Paësiello, which Madame Lebrun had sent from Naples that year.

Fame and popularity were already becoming poisoned to her, for the calumnies which assailed everything connected with the Court rained thickly upon her, and, innocent though she was, she felt them with a woman's keen sensitiveness. She was reported to light her fire with bank notes; she burned nothing but aloe wood; she had spent 60,000 francs on a single supper, for which M. de Calonne's purse provided the means. These accusations, however absurd, were highly dangerous; but her annoyance at having the name of M. de Calonne joined with hers was almost overcome by her sense of the ludicrousness of it. "A wig!" she exclaims, with the innocent drollery which gave a peculiar charm to some of her reminiscences,—"a wig! Imagine if I, with the love of the beautiful, could have admired a wig! I once declined a rich marriage because the gentleman wore a perruque. I never willingly painted any one thus attired."

The supper, whose fame even reached Russia, cost in

reality just sixteen francs. It was got up impromptu; some twelve persons had been invited to hear an author read his poem, and while Madame Lebrun rested on her sofa before their arrival, her brother read aloud a passage from the then famous "Travels of Anacharsis," in which a Greek dinner was described, with the receipt for several sauces, and it was suddenly resolved to try them that evening, and dress in Greek costumes. The atelier furnished shawls and dresses, worn on occasion by Madame Lebrun's models; a friend, who had a fine collection of Etruscan vases, lent cups and dishes, which were placed on a table with a screen and lamp artistically arranged. Joseph Vernet's daughter chanced to arrive first, and next, Madame de Bonneuil, a celebrated beauty; they entered with gay delight into the plan. Then the poet appeared, and was decked with a laurel crown, which a sitter had worn that day for a picture known afterwards as "The Love of Glory." The chaplet and a purple mantle transformed the poet into Anacreon. Another guest furnished a lyre; Madame Lebrun wore her usual white dress, adding a wreath and veil; and her little daughter, with a young friend, carried round slender Etruscan vases, and waited on the guests. The whole effect was so striking, that each guest in turn stood up to contemplate the rest seated round the table. At ten o'clock came the last visitors, all unaware of the scene which awaited them, and which, indeed, had chiefly been got up to astonish them. The doors were opened, they stood in

amazed bewilderment, while the assembled company sang to the lyre Glück's chorus of "God of Paphos and Cnidus."

The only extravagance of which Madame Lebrun was guilty at this supper, was that of giving her guests a bottle of old Cyprus wine, which had been presented to her. So much, however, was said of its enormous cost, that the king was seriously displeased, and spoke with anger of it to the Marquis de Cabrières, who fortunately was able to give a true report of it, as he had been present; but "still the wonder grew," and the tale spread to Rome, Naples, and even Russia.

The Anacreon of this day was, that Lebrun, who liked to be known as Pindar, and wrote of himself,—

> "Comme un cèdre aux vastes ombrages,
> Mon nom, croissant avec les âges,
> Règne sur la posterité."

But posterity has made a different estimate of his stilted lyrics, of which only the little poem on the loss of the ship "Vengeur" is worth recollection; and if he is remembered, it is less as Pindar than as the poet who, after writing grateful odes to Louis XVI., celebrated with ecstacy the death of king and queen. The witty *mot* of Benjamin Constant might have been applied to him: "*Il vient toujours au secours du plus fort.*" Madame Lebrun had no suspicion of his politics at the time of her Greek supper, and probably he merely floated with the stream, and would have been just as ready to produce raptures on the royalist side, had it been successful. She would never meet him in after days.

Shortly after her return from Flanders, Joseph Vernet proposed that she should be received as a member of the Royal Academy of Painting. It was by no means a new thing for women to be admitted; Madame Vallayer-Coster, who painted flowers, belonged to it, as did Madame Vieu, whose pretty picture of a dove brooding on her eggs in a wicker basket, had received the approbation of even the merciless Diderot, when he saw it in one of the biennial exhibitions which took place in the Louvre. One artist, however, strongly objected, perhaps from jealousy; this was M. Pierre, also a Court painter, but of the historical school. He was unable to prevent her admission, and her friends avenged themselves on him by some of those witty *vers de société*, so readily produced in those days, and for which the talent now appears to be extinct,—

"Au salon ton art vainqueur
Devrait être en lumière.
Pour te ravir cette honneur,
Lise, il faut avoir le cœur
De Pierre, de Pierre, de Pierre."

The terrible year of 1789 came, and dismay spread, even among the Republican party. The Abbé Sièyes was heard to say, "Really we are going too far," and Madame Lebrun replied, "So far that you will all lose your way." It became impossible for any one of the upper classes to go out of the house without being insulted; if Madame Lebrun were seen at her windows, the mob shook their fists at her; horrible threats against herself, the Court, and the nobles, rang perpetually in her

ears. She fell seriously ill, and could hardly be persuaded to take any pains to recover. "What good is it?" she repeated; but she had her child to care for; she rallied her strength, and though M. Lebrun refused to leave Paris, it was decided that as soon as possible she should go to Italy. As the Court painter, she was marked out for especial vengeance, and, as she said, she reasoned like the man accused of having stolen the towers of Notre Dame. "There they are, in their places," he said; "but clearly some one has a spite against me, so I am off."

A rumour of her preparations got abroad, and a troop of half-drunken Gardes Nationaux burst into her house, shouting, "You shall not go, Citoyenne, you shall not go!"

Vainly did she answer, that as every one was now free, she chose to use her freedom thus. They crowded round with threats and offensive language, terrifying her unspeakably. At last they withdrew; two, however, returned, but they had probably only joined the rest to protect her if necessary, for they said, with kindly earnestness, "We are neighbours of yours, madame; we come to advise you to depart at once; all this is killing you—but do not take your carriage, go by diligence."

It truly was killing her. When she went to bid her mother farewell, she was not recognized until she spoke, so changed was she, though it was but three weeks since they had met.

M. Lebrun went with her through the dangerous Faubourg St. Antoine. Happily for her, the inhabitants were either absent or asleep; all day they had thronged round Versailles, insulting the royal family as only a French mob knows how to do. The diligence was full of Jacobins, who talked of nothing but hanging and guillotining; every moment Madame Lebrun heard some friend's name among those destined to death, and her little girl grew so terrified, that at last Madame Lebrun said to the most violent, "I beseech you, sir, do not talk so before this child." It was a risk, but the man became silent, and then began to play with the little one.

At every town where the diligence stopped, crowds flocked to learn the news from Paris, and the Jacobins shouted triumphantly, "*Soyez tranquilles, mes enfans;* we have the baker and his wife all safe." Madame Lebrun was in misery, fearing the worst for her friends and the royal family, especially as armed men on horseback constantly galloped up, declaring that Paris was in flames, and the King and Queen murdered. She trembled too for her child and herself, though disguised as an ouvrière, with a coloured kerchief over her head, for one of the passengers began to talk of her, and described the portrait lately exhibited of herself, with her pretty little girl in her arms. Every moment she expected to be recognized and arrested; but they reached Lyons safely, and thence went towards Italy.

On Mont Cénis, however, she found herself known.

Thus far in safety, her fears grew lighter, and almost gaily she began, with several other passengers, to walk up the pass. Her heart leapt with terror as a postillion addressed her: "Madame should hire a mule; this is too fatiguing for a lady."

"A lady!" she faltered, "I am only a poor ouvrière."

The man laughed. "We know better: you are the artist, Madame Lebrun, and very glad we are to have you out of harm's way."

She never knew who this man was, nor how he came to recognize her.

At this time, even the cultivated world had little taste for natural scenery; and the dangers of the roads seem to have impressed Madame Lebrun much more than the beauty of the views. Her little daughter, then seven years old, was more struck with them than herself; and when, for the first time, she saw the sea, she exclaimed, "*Sais tu, maman, c'est plus grand que nature!*" The magnificence of the Swiss Alps, however, struck Madame Lebrun forcibly in later life. It had been her great wish to visit Rome, and her letter to her friend the landscape-painter Robert, shows her joy in finding herself there, mingled with that sad surprise, which every one must have sometimes felt that a great wish should have been brought about by such unlooked-for means. Hers had come to pass through disasters which left her homeless and penniless, indebted to an acquaintance for the means of paying her journey from Bologna.

This acquaintance was one who could effectually befriend her, for it was M. Mènageot, Director of the French Art Academy at Rome. He gave her room in his house, and took her to see whatever Rome offered most likely to interest her, and in her letter to Robert, the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoon, and the Dying Gladiator are amusingly mingled with tributes of admiration to altars and candelabrums. She resided some time in Rome, and her success in portrait-painting there enabled her to send large sums of money to her mother and husband. Every portrait was paid for at the rate of five hundred guineas; a full length, a thousand. When she went to Naples she received the same welcome, and she was much touched by the kindness of the queen, who was Marie Antoinette's sister, and tried to keep her at Naples by offering her a pretty house on the lovely Mediterranean shores. Madame Lebrun was too much afraid of volcanoes and malaria to accept it, and returned to Rome, where she found the aunts of Louis XVI., Mesdames Victoire and Adelaide, who had been allowed to escape from France after a stormy discussion in the Convention, thanks to the scornful remarks of a Deputy, that it surely could not injure the Republic to allow two old women to go and hear mass at Rome. They sent for Madame Lebrun to take their portraits. They also had been for a time near Naples, where they occupied a house belonging to the queen. Many emigrés gathered round them there, and though adversity had rendered Madame Victoire

sadder and sterner than ever, Madame Adelaide contrived sometimes to forget her sorrows, and enjoyed her release from a Court life, which had been very far from happy for her. Sometimes small impromptu balls were allowed by the Princesses, with one violin for orchestra, played by a M. Chazote, whose good-will was only equalled by his incapacity. Madame Adelaide had a delicate ear, and could play much better than he, though few people knew that she possessed this accomplishment, unheard of in a Princess of France! On one occasion, exasperated beyond her powers of endurance, she sprang up, snatched the instrument from the hands of the gasping player, and exclaiming "Dance on! Dance on!" played with a spirit and power which electrified her audience. But no one was so much startled as the elderly Duchess of Narbonne, who rose with majesty, crossed over to where sat Madame Adelaide, pausing to tune her violin, and spoke low and seriously. Poor Madame Adelaide felt the enormity which she had committed, and returned silently to her arm-chair, while the dancers cast looks on the cruel Duchess which ought to have slain her through her armour of whalebone and brocade.

Among the dancers was M. Goubaud, a young Roman artist, who afterwards painted a fine picture of Napoleon sitting on a rock at St. Helena, with an empty eyrie above him, a subject which inspired a beautiful but unfinished sketch of Paul Delaroche's. M. Goubaud was a great favourite of the Princesses,

and made a spirited and comic sketch of Madame Adelaide and her violin, which it is probable that he did *not* show her. It might have made a pendant to the clever drawing of Queen Elizabeth dancing high and disposedly to the music of her little fiddle, which Mr. Sharpe, better known as Conversation Sharpe, gave Sir Walter Scott, and which is at Abbotsford.

Rome, like every other city, was now full of emigrés; whither had they not fled? but all were persuaded that they should soon return to France; and at the last sitting which Madame Victoire gave Madame Lebrun she announced with joy that the troubles were over, as the king had escaped from France. "I have written to him, directing, 'To His Majesty the King of France,'" she added; "they will know where to send it."

Madame Lebrun returned home delighted, but presently she heard her man-servant singing. He was known as a Red Republican; and with sudden terror she exclaimed, "Some misfortune has happened to the king!" The next day she heard of the flight to Varennes, and the miserable return of the royal family to Paris.

The emigrés still found it so impossible to realize the state of public events, that at this very time Madame Lebrun went to Turin, intending to return to France. What she saw there appalled her. Every street was full of fugitives, young and old, of all ranks; starving children screamed for bread; the squares were crowded by exhausted women and men, weak with hunger, yet ashamed to beg. Among them Madame Lebrun saw a

noble old soldier, a Chevalier de St. Louis, with his cross on his breast, leaning on a post in a lonely street. His looks told that he was starving, but he made no sign, and seemed to find it easier to die than to ask for help. She went up to him and thrust all the money which she had with her into his hand; and he burst into sobs and tears. The King of Sardinia, who had married Louis XVI.'s sister, Clotilde, showed the greatest kindness to the poor refugees, and this officer, with many others, was received into his palace. The queen employed Madame Lebrun to go about the town, trying to find room for the rest, but Turin was overflowing.

Restless, and devoured by anxiety for those she loved, Madame Lebrun went to Vienna, where she spent two years and a half. The news from France was daily worse. There were ten prisons now in Paris crowded with victims, of whom sometimes upwards of fifty perished in a day. In six weeks more than five hundred persons were executed. Looking one day at a newspaper, Madame Lebrun saw the names of nine of her friends who had been guillotined. The misery of suspense seemed less to her than such certainty, and thenceforward she never dared take up a paper, and it was only when a letter chanced to reach her that she knew what was happening in Paris.

In 1795 she went to St. Petersburg, where Catherine II. received her with graciousness, which certainly prejudiced her in favour of the Empress, who had much

love for Art. "If we speak of her weaknesses," says Madame Lebrun, in her memoirs, "it must be as we name those of Francis I. or Louis XIV. They had no ill effect on the welfare of their subjects." Personal attachment speaks here, and the lax morality of the French Court. Divinity hedged in every king to Madame Lebrun, and royalty always dazzled her a little; but then she owed everything to the aristocracy, and had such reason to abhor democracy as only those who lived under the Reign of Terror can realize.

At St. Petersburg she heard again of that Greek supper which had caused so much scandal in Paris. A certain M. de L—— had assured the Baroness Strogonoff that he had been one of the guests, and that it cost 60,000 francs. The Baroness was at Vienna at the same time as Madame Lebrun, who took two portraits of her husband, and she spoke of it to her, apparently, however, with her magnificent Russian notions, noways surprised at the extravagance. If she were not surprised, Madame Lebrun was, especially as she had no acquaintance with the gentleman. It chanced that when she went to St. Petersburg he was there too, and moreover called on Madame de Strogonoff while Madame Lebrun was with her. The Baroness maliciously observed, "How glad you must be that your friend Madame Lebrun has come here!" Quite unconscious of the trap, he assented, and she went on to speak of the Greek supper, to which he replied as best he could, till, losing patience, the artist said,

"Monsieur, then, was very intimate with Madame Lebrun?" He replied in the affirmative. "That is strange indeed," she said, "for I am that Madame Lebrun whom you calumniate, and I never saw you before!"

Completely abashed, he started up, seized his hat, and hurried out.

Paul I. showed the same favour to strangers which his mother had done, and her death in 1796 made little difference to the refugees, though to the Russians a time of terror had come. The slightest offence was visited by imprisonment, or exile to Siberia. His kindness and his anger were alike uncertain and terrible; his tyranny seemed to seek out the most puerile ways of showing itself. Round hats were forbidden, as being tainted with republicanism (hats seem peculiarly liable to disquiet despots: they constantly exercised the vigilance of the authorities in Italy during Austrian rule). Powder, on the other hand, every one was ordered to wear. Madame Lebrun had a peculiar dislike to it, and on this point David entirely agreed with her, and when it was most in fashion in Paris they had led a successful revolt against it. Surely she must have been a little tainted with republicanism, for, in defiance of Paul, she now painted a portrait of the young Prince Bariatinsky without any, but it nearly cost both dear. One day he rushed in, pale and shaking with alarm. "I have met the Czar," he faltered out. "I had barely time to rush under an archway, and I am horribly afraid that he saw me." The Prince wore no powder; and had Paul

observed it, he would probably have sent him to Siberia.

To Madame Lebrun Paul was always gracious. An imperial order obliged all who met him to alight from their carriages, no matter what the weather, and wait till he had passed. Unluckily, it was not easy to know when he was near, for he would walk unattended through the streets, but he expected all coachmen to divine his presence, and if they made a mistake, he visited it on their masters. One day Madame Lebrun saw him coming, though the coachman did not; in great alarm she called out, "Stop! that is the Czar," and was springing from her carriage, when Paul, who this time was in a sledge, himself alighted, and came up to tell her that foreigners were not expected to observe this ukase, least of all herself.

Other emigrés had reason to be grateful to Paul. As a general rule, only the richer ones came to Russia; the poorer fled to nearer countries, such as England; but it chanced that the Comte d'Antichamp came to St. Petersburg without any resources except his French ingenuity, which he turned to account by manufacturing indian-rubber shoes. They became the fashion. Paul saw them, heard their history, and provided for the Count. An old friend of Madame Lebrun's, the historical painter Doyen, was also established at St. Petersburg, employed in painting a ceiling for the new palace of St. Michael, where Paul loved to go and superintend the progress of the work. One day a

nobleman who had accompanied him, and who was not too well versed in the laws of perspective, said, "Monsieur, among those hours which you are painting round the chariot of the Sun, I see one dancing in the distance; you have made her smaller than the rest, yet the hours are all alike." "Sir," answered the imperturbable painter, "you are perfectly right; but the distant one is only a half-hour."

Madame Lebrun was too profitably occupied to think of leaving St. Petersburg, though she felt far from safe under the April favour of Paul. About this time her likeness of Marie Antoinette, dressed in blue velvet, was sent her from Paris, and all the city flocked to see it. To the French emigrés it was especially dear; the Prince de Condé stood before it unable to speak, and burst into tears. In June, 1800, the Academy of St. Petersburg did Madame Lebrun the honour of electing her one of its members, as the Roman Academy and that of Berlin had already done. The ceremony was imposing. At the appointed hour Madame Lebrun, dressed in the colours of the Academy, with a kind of riding-habit, presenting the startling combination of a purple bodice and yellow skirt, the Academic colours, and a hat and feathers, was led into a long gallery in the salon, at whose upper end sat in state Count Strogonoff, "Directeur des Beaux Arts." Rows of seats had been raised on either side of the gallery, and to reach the salon it was necessary to pass through the double row of spectators; but Madame Lebrun had

lived in public all her life; in her heart she was rather amused at the general expectation that she would be overcome. She walked calmly by, pleased by the friendly faces smiling on her, but when the Count, in a flattering little speech, presented her with the diploma, which in the Emperor's name created her a member of the Academy, such a thunder of applause broke out that she was overwhelmed, and tears filled her eyes. She always said that this public proof of affection and esteem had given her one of the happiest hours in her life.

There is a portrait of Madame Lebrun at St. Petersburg, in which she appears with her palette in her hand; she presented it to the Academy in return for the honour it had bestowed on her. Another is to be seen in the interesting collection of portraits of artists by their own hand in the Uffizi at Florence.

Domestic troubles embittered the latter part of her stay in Russia. Her daughter had grown up a pretty, headstrong girl, ruling despotically over Madame Lebrun, who had given her all those advantages of education which she never enjoyed herself. Disappointed in married life, and with a mother for whom she could feel no strong affection, she concentrated all her love on this child, enjoying the admiration which she excited, and charmed to see her own love of Art reappear in her daughter M. Lebrun wrote from Paris that Guérin had asked her in marriage, and this delighted the mother, for Guérin was rising into fame, short-lived, but

brilliant, and his picture of Marcus Sextus returning to Rome after the proscriptions of Marius and Sylla, to find his home laid desolate, so exactly hit the feeling of the times, that it was characterized as "The picture of the emigrés." Eight years had worked a mighty change in the temper of Paris.

The surprise and dismay of Madame Lebrun were pitiable when she found that "Brunette," as she called her, would not hear of this alliance, and instead, was bent on a marriage with the secretary of a Russian family, a pale, sentimental, romantic-looking personage, who was at least as much attracted by the supposed fortune, as by the blue eyes of Mademoiselle Lebrun.

Madame Lebrun was now beset with solicitations in favour of this M. Nigris from the family in which he was secretary; he threatened to elope with Brunette, or invoke the Czar's interference, and Mademoiselle Lebrun not only became entirely alienated from her mother, but fell so ill, that poor Madame Lebrun wrote to tell her husband that Guérin's proposals must be declined. The wilful pair had their way, and a fortnight after, when Madame Lebrun asked wistfully if her daughter were happy, she received the careless answer, "His dressing-gown is enough to disenchant one. How can one love a man who looks like that!"

The heartlessness, and the unsatisfactory marriage of this child, seemed to take all joy out of Madame Lebrun's life. She scarcely cared even for her art; she was ill of restlessness and of a nameless malady, which,

had it been classified, might have been called heart-sickness, and the news of her mother's death in France deepened her depression. A journey to Moscow did her good; she returned to St. Petersburg, but it had become too painful a residence, and, in obedience to her doctor's orders, she left Russia and went back to France, after a short stay in Germany,—France, which she had left thirteen years before, and over which the Revolution had since swept.

Among those who had survived that time, and were little altered by it, was M. Lebrun. He welcomed his wife with amiable cheerfulness, and took her to her old home in the Rue du Gros Chenêt, which he had furnished splendidly in honour of her return. It is true that she had to pay the bills. She received a pleasing proof that the years—and such years!—which had elapsed since she fled from Paris, had not caused her to be forgotten, for when, on the evening of her arrival, she appeared at a concert, she was at once recognized, and audience and musicians joined in a burst of applause. This welcome touched her almost as much as that of the Academy of St. Petersburg had done. A little later, the change of public feeling, which now held it an honour to have been faithful to those opinions which had been so dangerous a few years before, was again strongly shown. There was a gathering of wit and celebrities in the salon of the famous actress, Mademoiselle Contat, to hear Légouvé read his poem on the "*Mérite des Femmes*," which tells of some of the heroic deeds done by women during the

Revolution. Mademoiselle Contat was no common actress, and amongst those who flocked to her receptions were the gay and gallant nobles of the old régime, as well as the men of most mark who belonged to the new. M. Vigée, the brother of Madame Lebrun, was one of the habitués of this salon, and both were present on this occasion. The subject of the poem had not been previously announced, and something of a malicious smile ran round as M. de Ségur murmured, on hearing it, "The merit of women; ah, well, it cannot be long!"

But all soon were hushed into gravity, for, whatever the merit of the verses, the subject came home to the hearts of all, and no one could hear unmoved the name of Mademoiselle de Sombreuil, above all when remembering that her sacrifice had been in vain. When Légouvé came to the words,—

> "Elles seules, d'un zèle ingénieux et tendre
> Osèrent des tyrans aborder les courroux——"

all present turned to Madame Lebrun, as the representative of these brave women, "recollecting," says Madame Gay, who describes the scene in her "Salons Célèbres," "that she had been forced by her friends to flee when on the point of paying with her life the honour of having given to France its finest portrait of the Martyr Queen."

There is, of course, much exaggeration here, for Madame Lebrun's exile had been, on the whole, a happy and prosperous time, and her sufferings small indeed compared to those of thousands, but we feel how

strong was the recoil in public opinion when we find such an exaggeration possible.

The change in public feeling was worked in a way that must have come home to Madame Lebrun, though we find remarkably little about art or artists in her memoirs. She seems to have been content with her own branch of it; to have only wished to render Nature agreeably, without seeking any ideal, and to have felt a calm and bright pleasure in her success, though she was artist enough never to be entirely contented with what she produced. It is, however, impossible that she could have been indifferent to all that had befallen the French school of Art since she left France. For many years David had been labouring to spread the doctrines of Winckelmann and Lessing, and to carry on the work which Vieu began, of infusing a purer taste into the public. Naturally more of an artist than a painter, and full of his national love of rule and system, David sought indefatigably after the laws which govern the beautiful. "The Greeks had few types," he would say to his pupils; "they sought not variety, but perfection of form," and following, as he believed, their example, he studiously neglected dramatic effect, seeking only to interest by the perfection to which he brought every figure in his paintings. It was this desire to teach perfection of form which induced him to paint his figures undraped, even when well aware of the inappropriateness of so representing them. He sought far more to cultivate his powers than to create; and he laid great stress

on a maxim too often forgotten, that an idea is useless unless it can be expressed. This cold and patient seeking betrays talent rather than the fervour of a genius, but it deserves due honour. To the last day of his life, as his pupil, "Étienne," tells us, he was still seeking the right road in Art; he hoped that he was not far from it, but he knew that it was not clear to him. "The steps that I have made towards it," he added, "will be counted as praiseworthy attempts, but some one else must take up the burden where I lay it down, and carry it to its destination. I see the road afar off, but I have not reached it, and I shall not have the time to reach it!"

With these pathetic words in our minds, can we blame David, or even wonder at the sudden changes of style which have perplexed his critics? We see that he was feeling about uncertainly, believing fully that somewhere there was light which he could not see; and no honest thinker ever retained one unchanging set of opinions from youth to old age.

David had done much for French Art, but there was an element of decay in his school. Its tendency was to return to Greek and Roman traditions; there was nothing national in it; nothing born of the inner life of the French, and therefore nothing original. The romantic school was a necessary protest against that of David. Up to 1800 he had reigned absolute, but by that time other names began to be known as powers—Ingres and Isabey, Gros, Gérard, and soon after, four pupils of Guérin, far more famous than their master,

Géricault and Delaroche, Delacroix and Scheffer. The collection of statues and pictures, which had belonged to religious establishments, now confiscated and placed in the Church and cloisters of the Petits Augustins, exercised great influence on the rising artists, who began to desert the style which hitherto had reigned with undisputed sway, for a very different one. David's remark was, "Better paint still life well than history indifferently;" and so little do his pupils seem to have been influenced by him, notwithstanding their profound respect for his teaching, that we may reject the accusation brought against him, of seeking to tyrannize over their minds and force them from their natural bent. He advised them, but he could endure to see his advice rejected, and when, with one consent, the painters of the day crowned Gros's "Pestiferés de Jaffa" with a trophy of laurels, in the exhibition of 1804, David declared it was one of the happiest days of his life. "He passed through too many phases to have lasting influence over his pupils. The curious sect of the Primitives sprang up in his own atelier, exaggerating his doctrines and creating a schism in his school, and the sight of Frenchmen walking about Paris in togas and sandals awoke a sense of ridicule in the profane vulgar which alone would have been fatal to the classic school. After his narrow escape from the guillotine in 1795, David ceased to make bad speeches, withdrew from the political life in which he had so fatally entangled himself, and devoted all his thoughts to his picture of the Sabines, which he

hoped to make "more Greek" than his earlier works. At a later period he became the painter of contemporary events, while the Romantic school grew daily a more formidable rival to his own, destined as it was at last to triumph, and to fail in triumphing. Paul Delaroche and Ary Scheffer are eminent examples of this school, which has produced some exquisite works, and many chiefly good to be forgotten.

As we have said, there is nothing in the memoirs of Madame Lebrun to show whether she entered into the battle between the two schools, but her taste most certainly had led her to prefer the latter. Anatomy and proportion charmed her far less than did colour, and the Louvre had the strongest attraction for her. It was now overflowing with conquered treasures, and was crowded with copyists. The pictures and statues, most of which afterwards returned to their lawful owners, had been partly collected by Gros, whom she had painted as a child, and often admitted to her atelier, and now hardly recognized in the grown-up man, who, while fancying himself devoted to the principles of David, and constantly repeating to his pupils, "These are not merely my opinions;—I teach David—David—David——" yet struck out a remarkable and independent line of his own, as the painter of battle scenes. He had been employed by the French Government in Italy to select the choicest treasures of the vanquished cities, and had distinguished himself honourably by his forbearance and courtesy in a most ungracious office.

Antoine Jean Gros was one of the many French artists whose sun has set in gloom. From childhood he had been devoted to art, and, like Gérard, he long eked out slender means by portrait-painting. His likeness of himself, now at Versailles, is a proof of his success in this line of art. Long brown curls hang around the forehead, and there are those large brown eyes, full of light, which Madame Lebrun speaks fondly of; the complexion and the red young mouth show the extreme youth of the artist. In fact, Gros was little more than sixteen years old when he painted this portrait. It shows a remarkable facility of execution, and contrasts pathetically with the likeness which he executed of himself some fifteen years later, where the lines in the features, and the mournful, almost sceptical, expression greatly change the character of the face.

After studying for a time under David, Gros went to Italy, where a kind of morbid melancholy seems to have seized him on seeing the noble works of art around him, while he could find time for nothing beyond the hard struggle to obtain daily bread for himself and his ruined mother, whom he fondly loved, and for whose sake he would always rouse himself to work. This constitutional melancholy was his mortal enemy, but he was saved from it at this time by Joséphine, then at Genoa, who was charmed both with him and his paintings, and introduced him to Bonaparte. The result was that "Bonaparte at Arcola" which became so popular. It was at this time that he learned to paint a battle-

field with the terrible and touching fidelity which was to make him famous; but the first large picture which he intended to execute never proceeded further than a sketch, for Junot, victorious at Nazareth, was the prominent figure, and Bonaparte disapproved of his aide-de-camp being made too important in the eye of the public. He did not object to the next which Gros painted, and the "Pestiferés de Jaffa" was given to the world. Bonaparte appears in it, with the light full upon him, fearlessly laying his hand on the breast of a dying man. All around this central figure are the sick and dying, but all gaze towards the great victor; even the sufferer who is undergoing an operation forgets his anguish for the moment when he looks on Bonaparte. It is to be regretted that the colouring of this fine picture seems fading, like too many of our own Sir Joshua Reynolds'.

This great success was followed up by the battle pieces of Aboukir, with the sun of the East upon it, and Eylau, eloquent beyond words of the sadness of war. Gros loved light and colour, movement and horses; but he had an almost feminine sympathy with pain and suffering, and it is this which seems to breathe from his canvas, and move the spectator with emotion rarely felt when we look on a subject of so little general interest. Perhaps Gros shrank from what such painting as this must have cost him; in any case, instead of creating a new school of painting, he seemed suddenly to sink into indifference, repeating himself or David;

and when he painted the cupola of St. Geneviève, while the admirers of David's school declared it to be a *chef d'œuvre*, others asserted that Gros had lost all originality, and that it was impossible to say whether he, or Gérard, or Girodet had executed it. Gérard, perhaps piqued by this comparison, remarked of the colossal figures, that they were "plus *gros* que Nature." Gros was too sensitive not to be keenly stung by criticisms, whether of fellow-artists or the public; the sense of failure weighed upon him, while with it came strange self-reproaches that he had led astray the artist world from the severe classical teaching of David. There were many to agree with him; he had rather the instinct of the painter than any sure knowledge, and had always been uncertain of his own genius. Now that others doubted it he despaired, strove vainly to stifle his wretchedness in dissipation, and at last drowned himself in a few feet of water under the reedy banks of the Seine, near Sèvres. Amongst all the sad stories of artist life, few are more melancholy than that of Gros.

Gérard, whom Madame Lebrun became acquainted with on her return to Paris, had a very different history, though in his, too, there is sadness enough, if we look closely. Success was slow to come, but Madame Lebrun appreciated the merit of the poor and struggling painter, later destined to take the portraits of all the royalties of Europe, so that it was said of him, with more wit than ce, that he was the painter of kings and the king of ers. Even the modified title of "king of portrait-

painters," would be far too high praise for this clever but mannered artist. He first became well known by his likeness of Madame Bonaparte lying on a couch, and Madame Récamier sat to him at the time that David also was painting her portrait. Was David piqued at his pupil being, as it were, considered his equal by the beautiful sitter? When she next came to his atelier he remarked that artists had fancies as well as ladies, and he should keep her portrait as an unfinished sketch. In this state it may now be seen in the Louvre.

Some of Gérard's best portraits are now at Berlin, in the possession of Marshal Blucher's descendants. They were the only spoil coveted by Blucher after Waterloo. Gérard's beautiful little oval picture of the child-king of Rome is not among them. It had a different fate, and is only known now by a rare print. Sent to Napoleon while in Russia, he hung it up outside his tent, and bade the soldiers look at their Emperor's son. It was lost in the terrible retreat of 1812.

Not only artists, but friends, old and new, crowded round Madame Lebrun, whom they declared as brilliant and charming as when she left France; but these meetings were full of tears; all who greeted her had lost child, husband, or parent, and her extreme agitation when she crossed, for the first time, the Place Louis Quinze (now Place de la Concorde), where the chief guillotine had stood, greatly alarmed her brother, who reproached himself severely for having taken that route. To those who had remained in Paris, the horrors had become familiar:

to her they were still fresh. The change of manners scandalized her; the old courtesy had vanished, or was only seen in some of those who belonged to the ancient régime, and while one set affected mincing phrases and an absurd costume, another made it a principle to talk a strange jargon and quarrel with all their neighbours. Some wore a vast muslin cravat as the banner of their opinions, long ringlets, and trousers on the same scale as the cravat; while the ladies combined singular attempts at a Greek costume with the short curls brought into fashion by Madame Tallien.

In fact, all was still confusion in France; during nearly twenty years all parties had committed errors or crimes. The Republicans had shed rivers of blood; the Royalists had borne arms against their country; each had invoked the names of truth and justice, and all had reason to regret the past. Vendéans and Republicans alike might, if they would, shelter themselves under the glory of Bonaparte, and find themselves welcomed by him, and the majority were willing to do so, though there remained a few who held obstinately to their own creed, and, to the great disgust of their own party, absolutely preferred to cause a scandal by dying for their principles to accepting the new order of things. A certain fusion of society took place, but it was strange and inharmonious; there was an impoverished and disdainful noblesse, a rich and uneducated bourgeoisie, and a military aristocracy composed of families whose sons or fathers had distinguished themselves under Napoleon. Madame Le-

brun was uneasy and unhappy in it, and she was not one, be it said to her credit, to worship the rising sun. She would never have exclaimed, as David did, carried away by Bonaparte's fame and his classical beauty; "*Voilà mon héros.*" Indeed, her prejudice against him was so strong, that his finely-chiselled features possessed no charm for her, and she was only astonished, as she naïvely says, that so small a man could be the famous general. She felt like the Countess of Auvergne, when at length she beheld Talbot.

> "I thought I should have seen some Hercules,
> A second Hector for his grim aspect,
> And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs . . .
> It cannot be this weak and wrizl'd shrimp
> Should strike such terror to his enemies."

A deeply unfavourable impression had been given her by Menageot, who had survived all dangers at Rome and at Paris, and came to see her. He had stood with Bonaparte on the field of Lodi, strewn with dead and dying, and the conqueror had calmly observed, "It would make a fine painting."

"There were several dogs there, howling over their dead masters," was Ménageot's indignant comment; "and the poor beasts seemed to me much more human-hearted than Bonaparte."

Wearied of Paris, Madame Lebrun procured a passport for England, and arrived there in 1802. To English readers the sketches of England seventy years ago form the most amusing part of her autobiography. She landed at Dover, and, with her mind full of revolu-

tions, was alarmed by a sight still often visible there, the crowd assembled on the pier to see the vessel arrive from France. Her journey had been neither as short nor as easy as if it had taken place in these days of steam boats, and the part which she dreaded most was still to come. In great fear of highwaymen, she put her diamonds in her stockings, hired a chaise with three horses, and set off with much trepidation for London, where she settled herself for a time at the Hôtel Brunet, Leicester Square. Her first night's rest was broken by some one walking and declaiming incessantly overhead; the next day she discovered an old Parisian friend in the offender, and begged him for the future not to perambulate his room and recite his verses aloud at night. She had the sensitive nerves of an artist; noise was intolerable to her; and in every town where she took up her abode, she had extreme difficulty in finding a lodging that suited her. Her friends must have been constantly at a loss where to seek her in Rome, so often did she change her quarters, now because there were rats in the house, and then because "grubs gnawed the woodwork over her head so that she could not sleep"! or for some other equally singular reason. As for London, it was worse than Rome in the matter of lodgings. "What with the trumpet of a regiment quartered near, which sounded out of tune, the tramping of their horses in Beak Street, the screams of a pet foreign bird bigger than an eagle," as she used to assert, kept by a lady in Portman Square; and the discovery that some

Indian ambassadors, who rented the house she was in, had buried two of their slaves in the cellar, she seemed destined never to settle anywhere. She was much disappointed too in not finding any National collection of pictures. The National Gallery did not yet exist; this want seemed especially great to an artist fresh from the Louvre, growing more and more splendid as Bonaparte filled it with treasures, and caused it to be cleared and restored from the strange state of confusion and uncleanness into which it had fallen. The air in London seemed to her made of black crape; Sunday was insupportably dull, as the mere sound of music brought a shower of stones against her windows from the mob outside; the "routs" she found duller still, where, instead of conversation amongst friends enlivened by some brilliant strangers, two or three hundred people were gathered together, the ladies walking arm-in-arm, the gentlemen holding aloof, a crowd everywhere, no seats, a general silence. An Englishman, whom she had known in Italy, asked her what she thought of these parties.

"Vous vous amusez comme nous nous ennuyerions," was her reply.

Walks in the Park seemed to her as doleful as the "routs;" to quote her own words, "The women walk on one side, dressed all in white; their silence and stillness makes them seem like gliding shadows; the men keep aloof, and are just as solemn. I *have* now and then seen a tête-à-tête, and amused myself by watching to

see whether they would speak, but never," adds the lively Frenchwoman, "never did I know the silence broken!"

She made West's acquaintance at this time, and admired the paintings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, especially his "Infant Samuel;" and Reynolds gave high praise to her portraits, defending them warmly and generously from the rough criticisms of some of the English artists, especially Northcote. On the whole, she was so happy in England that she was much vexed by the order from Government, which followed the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, that all Frenchmen resident less than a year in the country should immediately quit it. To her great satisfaction, the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., gave her a special permission to remain in England, travel where she pleased, and stay unmolested in any seaport which she chose to visit. He brought it himself, and it was a permission very difficult to obtain at the time. Certainly, Madame Lebrun had reason to speak well of Royal personages. She spent three years in England, visiting different towns and country houses, charmed with Bath, disdainful of Windsor Castle,. and *ennuyée* by Tunbridge Wells, but at last she was recalled to Paris by the arrival there of her daughter and M. Nigris, who had come to invite several artists, at the desire of Prince Narishkin, to visit St. Petersburg. M. Nigris left his wife in Paris; she had grown more than indifferent to him, and her misconduct and wilful selfishness darkened her mother's life once more. Madame Lebrun could not resolve to resume that

married life of her own which had been so unsatisfactory; it was tacitly settled that she and M. Lebrun should live apart, and she hired a house and continued to devote herself to art, but there was no open rupture.

Amongst the sitters who flocked to her atelier was Madame Murat, Bonaparte's sister, Annunciata Caroline, and the most troublesome sitter she proved to be by whom Madame Lebrun had ever been afflicted. The first time she came, she brought two lady's maids to dress her hair while she sat to the artist; Madame Lebrun would not hear of this—she was as despotic in her atelier as if she herself had been a Bonaparte, and they were dismissed; but, time after time, Madame Murat failed to keep her appointments, and when she did come she always had a fresh headdress and costume; the first time she wore her fair hair in ringlets; the next, it was arranged in a totally different manner, with cameos in it; once her dress was open, and richly trimmed; and then she insisted on being re-painted in another with different embroidery,—till Madame Lebrun, losing all patience, exclaimed to M. Denon, loud enough for Madame Murat to hear, "I have painted real princesses, and they never worried me nor kept me waiting!"

Bonaparte had been displeased by her visit to "perfidious Albion," but his annoyance did not show itself actively, nor did he object to her salon, though there assembled many of those inhabitants of the Faubourg St. Germain who would not appear at his Court, and whom he hated accordingly. For many years she continued

to receive her friends—she lived to extreme old age—in the well-known salon, ornamented by some of her own paintings. There might be seen the dignified head of Catherine II. of Russia, the portrait of Paisello, which she had painted at Naples, and which had won David's praises; a likeness of Lady Hamilton, as a Bacchante, and, close to it, the plain face of M. de Calonne, of whom it was wittily said, that he found but one thing impossible in his life, namely, to hinder the Revolution. Until 1830, a very numerous circle met regularly at Madame Lebrun's house, and even after that storm drove many into exile, some continued to visit her as before, but among them, two acquaintances whom she had known intimately in former days never appeared—Pindar Lebrun, who sought vainly for admission, and David, who did not seek it; she could pardon neither for the terrible part each had taken in the First Revolution. She could not always avoid meeting them, and once she and David were partners in a game of cards. Perhaps she was annoyed by it; at all events she was absent, and played so badly that David's wrath was roused, and he manifested his impatience in no measured terms. "Why did you not play your king?—play your king, I say!" he exclaimed. "Because I know how kings fare in your hands," she answered. David had voted for the death of Louis Seize. His hard black eyes sank; he became silent and embarrassed, and a moment or two later started up and left the room.

The last years of her life were saddened by the deaths

of many friends, and though her salon was never deserted, the younger generation which filled it had new aims, new hopes, and looked rather with wonder than sympathy back to the old times which seemed so far off to them, so near to her. Repeated revolutions upheaved the strata of society again and again, and dispersed those whom she loved. Madame Nigris died suddenly; and the death of M. Lebrun cost her more tears than might have been expected, considering what an indifferent husband he was. Her brother's loss, in 1820, was more keenly felt; but her later days were cheered by universal esteem, and the society of her two nieces, who were strongly attached to her; one of them was from childhood devoted to art, which naturally made an additional tie between aunt and niece, and the two girls were more truly her children than the poor wilful Brunette had ever been.

Madame Lebrun died in 1842, aged ninety years, having lived through six revolutions.*

* The First Republic, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire, the Restoration, and the fall of Charles Dix.

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